The CHRONICLES OF CROFTON

DEAN O'SULLIVAN

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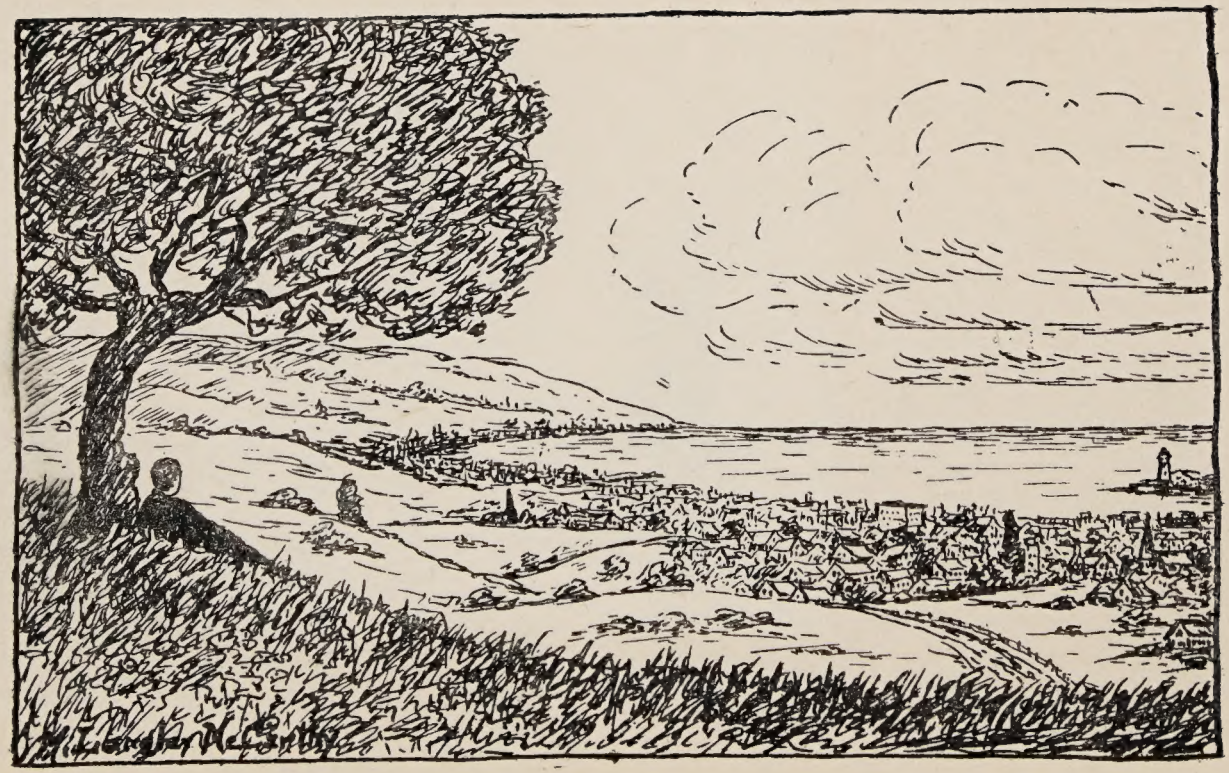
THE CHRONICLES OF CROFTON



Crofton

The CHRONICLES OF CROFTON

By

DEAN O'SULLIVAN

(*The Gleaner*)

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To the Memory
of my
FATHER and MOTHER
whose sacrifices made it possible for
me to become a priest, this volume
is
Affectionately Dedicated.

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A FOREWORD

CROFTON was my first pastoral charge. Like many other parishes in old Ontario, it had seen the high tide of its prosperity in the early days when the country was new and work was plentiful. Then, every pew was taken, and the vestibule was crowded at the Sunday Mass; but now the church seems all too large for the scattered few who remain. The sons and daughters of the Irish pioneers, who had built the church and presbytery, had, either through economic necessity or prompted by that wanderlust which seems to be in their veins, set out for new fields leaving only a handful to guard and maintain the little citadel of faith which, at the cost of much sacrifice and heart burnings, had been erected in an alien land. But we have managed to hold the standard aloft, and to keep the fires of faith burning around the old altar, mostly, alas, for the benefit of those who carry afar the brands to feed the flames in more pretentious sacrificial shrines.

It is discouraging work, this merely holding of the fort. One longs for reinforcements, one longs to advance; but lack of resources and lack of

numbers doom every new project to failure. There is the consolation, however, that one is at his appointed post, and doing what he can.

These old parishes are not progressive, but they are attractive. Who says there is nothing romantic about this Province? Why it exhales romance, not the romance of pioneer days, but the romance of today. There is nothing particularly poetic about the names of its places, the shape of its fields, the architecture of its buildings, the appearance of its streets and highways nor the customs of its people; but wherever human lives are being fashioned on the anvil of time, there is romance, be the environment never so prosaic. In this little parish of Crofton there is comedy; there is tragedy; there is pathos; there is heroism; in a word, all the elements of romance. I will try in these pages to picture them, and to give expression to some of the day dreams which they have evoked.

The Author.

THE CHRONICLES OF CROFTON

CHAPTER I

THE OLD FOLKS

Their simple lives
They lived without much praise. Yet God doth note
Fidelity, and He shall raise them up
In the rich glory of His Kingdom Come,
More high than Kings and Princes.

Lionel Johnson

"YOU go down Sandy Dump, Father; then turn up the Base Line till you come to Pigeon Hill; then you had better ask someone." Such were the directions that I received from a parishioner, when, during my first week in the mission, I was called upon to prepare an old man for death. Our streets have official names, and there are numbers on the houses, but no one pays any attention to the latter, and as to the former, the members of the older families of the town cling tenaciously to the names that are redolent of the joys and sorrows and friendships of earlier days. The number of those who saw Crofton in its infancy, who worshipped in the old church which fell a prey to the flames, and who shared in the labors and trials of the venerable soggarths of the past,

whose names are now but a hallowed memory, is becoming smaller year by year. It is remarkable how many of these octogenarians pass away in the month of March. They linger on through the cold of winter, and then, when spring is at hand and the days are growing warmer, the cord of life gives way. There may be a natural reason for this; but is has often occurred to me that it was in answer to their prayer to die in the month dedicated to him who expired in the arms of Jesus and Mary. It is certainly a great favor for them to reach purgatory just before the great Day of Atonement; for it is an augury that they will share in the joys of the coming Resurrection.

Nothing perhaps affords a greater contrast between the Christian and the pagan view of life than the attitude of believing and that of unbelieving people towards the aged and infirm. In the judgment of the world, when a man can no longer enjoy the pleasures of life, when he becomes dependent upon the care and charity of others, it were better for him if he were dead. In fact there are those who suggest that such persons should be gently removed so that they would not be a burden upon their relations or upon the State. One can

quite understand why the ox or the horse, which has outlived its usefulness, should be dispatched; for it was made for man's benefit, and, when it has ceased to serve that purpose there is no longer any reason why it should exist. It is indeed pathetic to see a faithful, dumb beast with the marks of toil upon its shoulders, standing neglected by the roadside, unstabled and unkempt. But there is a much sadder sight than that. It is that of the man, old and bent with years of labor, unconscious or unmindful of his immortal destiny, still clinging to life after the power to enjoy it has passed, preferring rather a cold, wretched, weary existence in this world to the blank uncertitude of that into which he shall soon enter, "unhousell'd, unappointed, unanel'd."

More pitiable still is the condition of the old worldling, surrounded by everything that wealth can buy, when the world's pleasures and joys and honors have for him become Dead Sea apples. The first has, at least, little to relinquish while the latter must give up much. If he had lived in the days of Tutankhamen he might have taken with him to his tomb his horses and his dogs, his chariots and his vessels of gold, to enjoy them in the other

life. But even that pagan consolation is denied him. In compliance with the customs of the age he may have above his coffin only the wreath that fades and decays, and around his body only the shroud in which there are no pockets.

There is another class which may be painted in brighter colors, albeit there must needs be much drab in the picture. In the days of their health and strength they did little for State or Church. While they were not guilty of any grave scandal, their lives were none too edifying. No converts were made through their example. Their light did not shine so as to proclaim His virtues, Who had bestowed upon them, the marvellous privilege of membership in His mystical body. But they clung to the Church, if not lovingly, with a certain degree at least of loyalty—and they kept the faith. Now they have grown old and are dependent upon their children, or perhaps our charitable institutions. They offer to others the opportunity of practising unadulterated charity; and they themselves enjoy much of the fruit of that charity, much of the fruit of the self-sacrifice of a faithful son or daughter, or of the consecrated virgins who minister to God's poor. Before the sun sets they make atonement,

as best they can, for the wasted golden hours of the morning and the noonday of life, and receive the final consolations of religion through the bounty of Him Whose mercies are above all His works.

Ah! but there are others, and, thank God, not a few of them in Crofton who were once the beacon lights of Catholicity in the town, who

> Toiled and heard Mass;
> Did what they could, and now do what they can.

Through age and infirmity, they are as much separated from the busy life about them as if they dwelt in a cloister. There are those who see no benefit to be derived from these years of inactivity, just as there are those who cannot appreciate the value of a life of prayer and atonement. Even the Catholic mind has been contaminated with this error. Did not the Holy See recently condemn the teaching that so-called passive virtues are unsuited to this age, pointing out that there is no such thing as passive virtue, that all virtue is active? We are much influenced by the spirit of the world; and the world lauds only the virtues of Martha. If an infirm person be a blessing to a home or a community, as the saints attest, these years, that seem so wasted in the eyes of worldlings, are golden

years for the invalid himself and a well-spring of rich graces for the home and for the parish.

I have just returned from taking Communion to several of these. This was quite an ordeal in the old days when I had to go on foot or in a buggy, but now with my Ford I can dash up hill and down dale and make the circuit in a couple of mornings. These visits are always a source of edification and of comfort to me. O! the wonderful condescension of our God, who deigns not only to dwell in our midst, but Who even allows Himself to be carried down to the humble homes of His children, when they are not able to come up to His house ! How cordial is the welcome He receives—the candle of faith to meet Him at the door, the white linen and the little bouquet for the banquet table, the picture of their Guest upon the wall, and, dearest of all to His Sacred Heart, those greetings, "O! my dear Jesus," "O! my loving Saviour,"—greetings which bespeak that affection which is the choicest flower of charity!

When one leaves a home like this with a fervent "God bless you, Father!" ringing in his ears, he feels consoled and strengthened. He is consoled by the realization that, no matter what his own short-

comings may be, there is a power, that the world wots not of, which is sustaining his weak arms, as did Hur and Aaron those of Moses on the Mount, and which is aiding him in his daily conflicts. And he is strengthened, too, by the example of the patience, the piety and the joyfulness of those who have much greater trials to bear than he, and who enjoy even fewer of the world's pleasures. Yes, these old people are veritable guardian angels of the home and of the parish, whose presence breaths a benediction. Wise are they, not only with the wisdom begotten of years of experience, but with that more exalted wisdom that comes from prayer and meditation and detachment from the things of the world, and which gives to their spiritual eyesight the power to penetrate that earthly mirage which obscures our vision and to see things "in speculum aeternitatis." Though their hairs are whitened with the snows of many winters, they have still the hearts of children. And why should it not be so? They are still young. They have not yet finished the first stage in life's journey. Like children their hand is still being held in that of God's providence, and their footsteps illumined by the lamp of faith. But soon for them grace

shall merge into glory, and the dim light of the morning of faith give place to the noonday splendour of the Vision which endureth forever.

CHAPTER II

ST. JOSEPH'S DAY

Joseph, honoured from sea to sea,
This is your name that pleases me—
"Man of the House."

There are little feet that are soft and slow
Follow you whithersoever you go!

There's a little face at your work-shop door
A little one sits down on your floor.

Holds out His hands for the shavings curled,—
The soft little hands that have made the world.

Mary calls you: the meal is ready:
You swing the Child to your shoulder steady.

You who kept them thro' shine and storm,
A staff, a shelter, kindly and warm.

Joseph, honoured from sea to sea
Guard me mine, and my own roof-tree,
"Man of the House!"

Katharine Tynan

MASS is just over and little groups of women have assembled on the church steps or on the sidewalk to exchange greetings and discuss plans for the bazaar which is to be held after Easter. The children are in the basement, regaling themselves with hot coffee, provided by the housekeeper to wash down the dry lunch that they must perforce bring with them as there is not time to return to their homes for breakfast before school

opens. Only a few men were present and not many young women, as they had to be at their appointed tasks before the hour for Mass. Nevertheless there was an unusually large number at Communion and among them many of the old folks who had made their first appearance since the severe weather began early in January.

This is our big novena, better attended than even that of Pentecost. One reason for this is that I began with it my labours in Crofton, on the advice of a very dear friend who had been my pastor in boyhood and later my superior in curate days. But there is another reason still more potent. Pentecost does not appeal to our people as strongly, nor do they understand its significance as well. I think that we priests are partly to blame for this. We have not sufficiently explained nor frequently enough insisted upon the very intimate relations that exist between the Holy Ghost and the individual soul and the life of the Church militant. There is, however, another consideration. We are all very human. Our imagination and our senses play a large part in our devotions. But neither the imagination nor the senses find much scope for their activity in contemplating the mystery of Pente-

cost. It is true that there was a mighty wind from heaven and descending tongues of fire. But as the wind was not like ordinary wind nor the fire like ordinary fire, the imagination registers but a vague impression of either. Then, too, the purpose of the mystery was so colossal and so purely spiritual that, however overawed we may be by its sublimity, it does not make to us that personal appeal that the human and the intimate effect. Though we do not tell Him so, as we should, we are thankful to the Holy Ghost for having come down to earth to take up His abode in the mystical body of Christ, the Catholic Church, to become its Divine Soul, directing infallibly its teaching, imparting to its ministers the tremendous powers of Christ's priesthood, and ensuring its perpetuity. Yes, we are thankful, but not half as thankful as we should be, for that security which we possess and the spiritual consolations which we enjoy as members of that mystical body. Again we are thankful to the Holy Spirit for the mystery which He wrought at Nazareth; but when we think of the Incarnation, our imagination leaves Him out of the picture, and we see only the Divine Child, the virgin Mother

and the kindly venerable man who was known as Joseph the Carpenter.

I think that parish priests should be especially loyal to St. Joseph. It were needless to suggest the fostering of devotion to one whose praises are in both Testaments, who was so intimately associated with the Fountain of all grace and mercy and who has been entrusted with the keys of the celestial granary. There is a difference, however, between loyalty and devotion. A fellow feeling should make us wonderfully loyal to the head of the Holy Family. With all due reverence let me say that in every community there are two persons whose relations to the people are very much akin to that of St. Joseph to his clients. These two are the family doctor and the parish priest. All three have been more or less overshadowed by specialists. This is an age of specialists. There are saints who are specialists, doctors who are specialists and clergymen who are specialists. The family or the religious community, as the case may be, go to St. Joseph with all their little daily wants and pains. They take it as a matter of course that he will help them. If he does not come to their assistance as quickly as they think he should, they turn his face

to the wall. They would not think of treating other saints this way; they might be offended, you know. But St. Joseph is their own and one can be familar with his own, even to the verge of unintentional disrespect. If some extraordinary favor is needed they betake themselves to a specialist, some saint who performed great miracles—St. Joseph never wrought any. Like St. Joseph, the parish priest and the family doctor are supposed to be able to deal with ordinary spiritual and physical ailments, but when there is a serious case such as hardening of the arteries or cancer, a specialist is summoned. His words of wisdom are carefully treasured up. His every look and nod is noted and variously interpreted. He has the reputation. That's the secret.

It is quite easy to explain the existence of specialists in each case. There is harmony and variety in all the works of God. There are diversities of graces, of operations and of ministries, but the same Spirit Who worketh all in all, giving to one the gift of healing, to another the gift of miracles, and so on. Hence we have that grand galaxy of heavenly stars, each shining with the reflected splendour of the Sun of Justice and proclaiming the

wonders which He has wrought in them. But while some of them, like comets, trail for a brief period their blaze of glory across our spiritual vision, and then disappear for years or for centuries, St. Joseph, our fixed and steadily luminous star, abides ever with us.

This illustration of the comet is equally apropos in the case of the medical or spiritual specialist who visits a community or parish. He comes, he shines and he disappears. The family doctor and the parish priest are eclipsed for the nonce. Perhaps in each case it was due to a brighter light, though in the latter instance at least other factors are to be taken into account. The parish priest is the ordinary channel of grace for his people. The missionary is an extraordinary channel, and a mission is a time of extraordinary graces. Hence if John Mulcahy, whom the pastor has pleaded with in vain, kneels with a softened heart in the confessional, it is simply an evidence of extraordinary graces of compunction. And if Thomas O'Reilly declares that he never heard such eloquence and had learned a lot about the Church that he never knew before, it is due to extraordinary graces of enlightenment—or perhaps to the strange voice. Missionaries

should be very humble men, for they are continually exposed to the temptation of thinking themselves specialists because of the success of their missions. The saints in heaven, whom God makes the channels of extraordinary graces, are free from this danger, for they are confirmed in grace and see not dimly. But even holy men may succumb to "that last infirmity of noble minds" and vainly imagine that the unwonted light and warmth that the unseen Spirit had diffused throughout the parish, is in large measure due to the superior qualities of the transmitter.

Methinks I hear the reader say: He is revealing a little infirmity of his own. No, I am just pricking some pious fads anent popular saints and holy missionaries. There is no need of being jealous of any of these specialists. St. Joseph need not, if he would, be envious of the popular saint of the day. Devotions, like fashions, change, and those who cannot change their fashions change oftenest their devotions. But after they have indulged in these altogether healthy spiritual dissipations, there is a return to the staple and the ordinary. When the glory of the heavenly comet is fading above the horizon, when the eminent doctor has returned

to the city and the great missionary has departed for other fields, it is "poor St. Joseph," "poor old Dr. Parsons," "poor Father John," expressions which evince the abiding affection of the people for the things that belong to normalcy.

CHAPTER III

THE END OF LENT

The air is like a butterfly
With frail blue wings.
The happy earth looks at the sky
And sings.

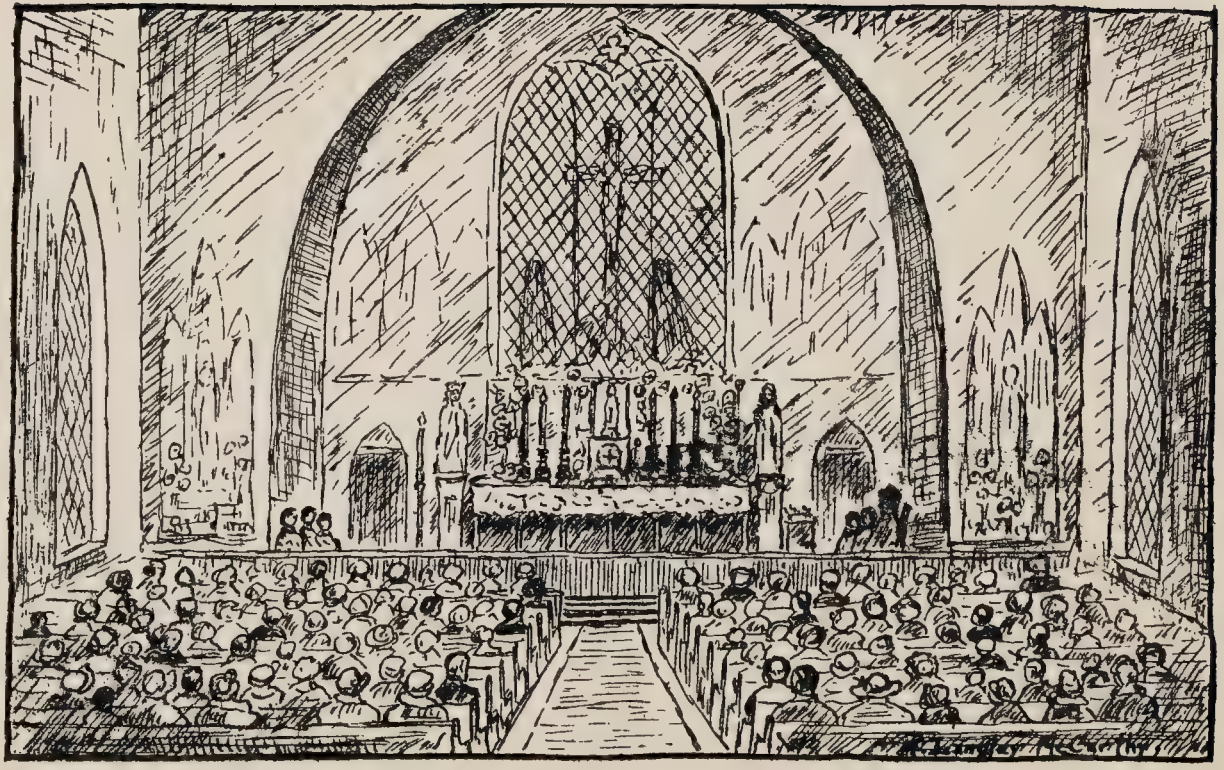
Joyce Kilmer

THE attitude of our people towards Lent offers an interesting psychological study. It begins with a great flourish. The trumpet has been sounded in Sion and the people have been assembled to sanctify the fast. All are out to get the ashes, a not particularly pentitential work in itself. All enter the race but all do not make the circuit. Before the first lap is covered many drop out or lag behind. These will take a short cut and be in at the finish. They will all be up to get the palm, and be in their places at the Easter Banquet. Ah yes, Thomas A. Kempis, you knew human nature well "Jesus has now many lovers of His Heavenly kingdom, but few that are willing to bear His cross; many companions of His table but few of his abstinence, many who follow Him to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the chalice of His passion." Of course the great majority will adhere to the strict letter of the law in regard

to fast and abstinence; but its original severity has been so mitigated by indults and dispensations as to involve little hardship. What I refer to are works of supererogation, self-imposed penances suggested by the spirit of the holy season, such as family prayers, assistance at morning Mass, the Way of the Cross, bidding adieu to the movies and the dance hall, placing the pipe on the mantle piece and the box of chocolates on the top shelf and leaving them there. While there are, and always have been, some shirkers, yet, thank God, the spirit of our fathers and mothers who kept the black fast is still to be found in the present generation of Canadian Catholics, so many of whom give to the community a splendid example of self-denial that is an eloquent testimony to the truth that their faith is a living principle which dominates their lives.

This year, the weather during the first half of Lent was extremely severe. Hence it was not surprising that the number who braved the biting cold and trudged through the unshovelled snow to be present at Mass in the winter chapel was indeed small. The school child, the stenographer, the busy housewife and the old lady from across the

creek may not have considered that they were doing anything extraordinary in attending morning Mass when the thermometer registered below zero; but in the eyes of their non-Catholic friends they were an object of mystery and of reverence. Church going on Sunday is not a matter that particularly edifies or surprises our separated brethren; for we are still, thank God, here in Ontario, a church-going people irrespective of creed. That inclement weather does not materially affect the attendance at the Catholic church may be a source of edification to them; but they explain it, to their own satisfaction, by the theory that Rome keeps her adherents under her thumb by obliging them, under pain of sin, to attend worship on the Lord's day. The same is true in a measure of early Mass during a mission. That people will get up at five o'clock every morning for a week to attend church before going to their work, does certainly make a favorable impression upon a generation which does not let religion interfere with its bodily comforts. But the action is robbed somewhat of its edifying and convincing force by the consideration that it is a special time of enthusiasm and religious zeal, and that everybody is going. Ah! that's the point.



Easter Morning

Everybody is going. What the world does admire is not the crowd, which lead on by a few, or under the spell of novelty, is manifesting extraordinary zeal in some good work, but rather the individual who, regardless of what the world thinks or of what other people are doing, follows not only the dictates but also the promptings of his own conscience. Yes, these valiant few, and the greater number who, on the altars of their own homes, are offering up the sacrifices which cold, sickness, hardships, and the pinch of poverty have placed upon their hearths, are making atonement for the laggards, the short-circuiters, the also-rans and the eleventh hour recruits so that each may receive his palm and his penny.

It is now Holy Week and, lo and behold! everybody is keeping Lent. I refer not only to my own aforementioned short-circuiters, but to the community generally. Even our Methodist friends have joined the ranks at the eleventh hour and are creating such a clamor in the press and in the pulpit as to leave the impression that they were the only ones who were mindful of the holy season. This is a little irritating to us who have been on a fish diet for the past thirty days and who have borne

the *pondus diei et frigus* but it is consoling to see a reaction outside the Church against the movement that would make Good Friday nothing more than a holiday.

It is interesting to trace the evolution of the sixteenth century schism. At first there was the break with Rome, the separation from the seat of legitimate authority. As yet there was no heresy, no denial of any Catholic doctrine. But soon, first one and then another Catholic dogma or practice was repudiated, until, at last, the severed branch had stripped itself of all similarity to the original tree. Then the reaction set in. One by one, we have seen in our day the old Catholic teachings and customs being revived. First it was the Mass, then the confessional, then devotion to Mary and the saints, then prayers for the dead, then the keeping of Lent, until now there remains little more to repudiate save the original schism. It is true that the Church of England has lead in this reaction; and it is only fitting that she should have done so, since she lead in the revolt. If the High Church party would acknowledge the authority of the Supreme Pontiff, thus ending the schism, then life and force and exuberance would be given to what

are now but sterile rites, arid pictures of the fountains of grace, and others who are yearning for unity would, at least individually, follow its example. Be that as it may, it is a happy augury that non-Catholics are beginning to centre their attention more upon the events of Holy Week; for these cry out with trumpet tongues against the gross materialism of the age, and proclaim that God is in His world not merely by reason of that omnipresence by which He is "not far from each one of us, about our path and about our bed and spieth out all our ways," but by His local and corporal presence in the tabernacles of our churches where He confers His grace upon the souls of men through that exalted member of His mystical body, the priesthood, as truly as, through the medium of His humanity, He forgave sin and consoled the afflicted when He walked through Galilee.

Easter Sunday morning has dawned at last, and the bright April sunshine is streaming in through the lofty stained glass windows of the old church. The winter is past, the snow is melted and gone, the flowers are appearing, the trees are budding and the voices of the birds are making melody in the land. Nature has burst asunder her cerements

and arisen, and, O the perversity of men who behold this annual miracle and refuse to believe in the resurrection of its Author!

During the singing of the Gloria, as I looked at the altar and the saints' shrines, all bedecked with flowers and lights, and caught a glimpse of the bright colors of the new hats and dresses in the congregation, the thought came to me: How beautifully the Church imitates the ritual of nature! In the grove on yonder hillside, worship is going on. Nature is offering her tribute to the risen Saviour and singing her grand *Exultet.* In both shrines there is a wonderful similarity in the rubrics. But yesterday, this sanctuary was robed in sombre purple, in keeping with the solemn and mournful dirges in which the Church gives expression to the compunction in the hearts of her children and their compassion for their crucified Saviour. But now, all is bright and gay, and grateful mothers have brought palms and lilies, roses and carnations, tulips and narcissi to bedeck the throne of Him Who has conquered death and the grave. Likewise yonder grove, a short time ago, was bleak and grey. The earth was wrapped in a mantle of discolored snow and the shrill March

winds were sighing a *Misrere* through the trees. Now it, too, is gay in its new dress of pale green, and mother earth is offering white and pink bouquets of the first spring flowers, whose perfume like incense pervades the warm bright atmosphere around nature's altar. Borrowing from the poet's idea, I see in each of those stately pines that lift their giant arms to pray, the patriarchs of my congregation who have for long years been in their places before the altar; and in the saplings and graceful white birches I see the youths and maidens who are offering to their God the homage of their fresh young hearts. Raising my eyes aloft to the choir I find the completion of my parallel. That exultant note which they have struck finds its counterpart in the paean of praise that is being rendered by the chorus of feathered songsters in yonder trees. The breasts of the little warblers are almost bursting with exultation and I am sure that they are singing "*Haec dies, quam fecit Dominus; exultemus et laetemur in ea.*"

CHAPTER IV

OUR EASTER BAZAAR

Riches of Bokhara,
    Treasures of the East;
Jewels of Golconda
    For the eyes that feast!

Toys and sweets and dainties!
    Beauty everywhere;
Only pay your sixpence
    At our Fancy Fair!

Charles Warren Stoddard

I HAVE found that immediately after Easter is a good time to hold a bazaar. The absence of distractions and amusements has given the ladies more leisure time to devote to sewing, and the spirit of the season has prompted them to use this time well; while the men are in such a happy mood,after having been to their duty, that, due to a feeling of gratitude and exhilaration of spirit, their purse strings are a little more easily unloosed than at other times. Add to this that, after a period of penance and self introspection, there is a craving for recreation, a desire to relax which is given vent to by the social intercourse and the amusements which the occasion offers.

Getting ready for a bazaar is like going on retreat. The thought of either does not evoke very much enthusiasm in the natural man or woman; and the initial exercises are entered into in a spirit of weariness. But soon ardor begins to reveal itself, and when the event draws to a close it is voted the best ever. Our preliminary meeting would not have appeared very promising to an uninitiated observer. It was not very well attended, and many of those who did come would seem to have been present for the sole purpose of making objections. Miss Mulqueen declared most emphatically that she was not going to take the fish pond another year. Miss Mulvaney wanted it strictly understood that the young ladies in charge of the tea room should collect their own supplies, and not be confiscating what belonged to her talent table. Moreover she hoped that they would attend to the decorating of their own booth, and not come down at the last moment, all dolled up, expecting everything to be ready for them. Then Mrs. Vallon, who is an adept at making coffee and who had always attended to this department, caused consternation by the announcement that they could get some one else for her position, one of those househo

experts, she suggested, who were trying to inflict their new-fangled ideas on her. All this would seem rather disconcerting, but it did not alarm me in the least. My experience had taught me that the objectors, having aired their grievances, would all assume their appointed tasks with renewed vigor.

As I have intimated, a bazaar is not looked forward to with joyful expectancy either by the pastor or the workers of a parish. The former would gladly choose some other means of raising the necessary funds, if he knew of any equally efficient. "Why does not Father," says a parishioner of very tender susceptibilities, "tax the people instead of having those begging bees? I, for one, would gladly subscribe ten dollars." Ah, but would he? Some of these vain boasters are found wanting when it comes to the test. But, granting his sincerity, he overlooks the fact that there is in every parish a large number of people who are unable to make a substantial donation in money, but who will gladly give of their time and labor to assist in any good work. This manner of bringing the members of the congregation together has, besides, very real advantages. It promotes sociability, which unfortunately has become, in some

places, a not too striking characteristic of our Catholic people. It stimulates a healthy rivalry in church work, and fosters a laudable sentiment of parish pride. In small parishes, where the help of each one is needed, this latter quality is much more in evidence than in large congregations.

There has been a movement to prohibit one feature of our bazaar; that is the prize-drawing contest. This has, I know, been stigmatized by ultra-moralists as gambling, but I have reason to believe that they have been influenced in their views not altogether by any great zeal for morality. As a matter of fact no one ever contracted the habit of gambling by plunging at a church fair. The invitation to buy a ticket is but a veiled way of asking a man to give a donation, and his chief motive in buying the ticket is not to win the prize, which after all but serves the purpose of introducing the element of luck that gives interest to all innocent games of chance. Of course, people should give from a supernatural motive, and not have what they owe to the Church wheedled out of them by some device; but as long as human nature is human nature we must take some pointers from Mr. Barnum in order to meet the evergrowing cost of church maintenance.

I have a strong suspicion that the personage so closely associated with church fairs in the past, the young lady who asks you to take a chance on a sofa cushion, is not going to become an extinct species. If so, I take off my hat in reverence to her memory. We have had her here in Crofton in the plural. Some are still with us while others are in heaven. I have in mind especially one of the latter. When I would call upon her to assume again her usual task, she would accede to my request with that cheerfulness and spirit of whole souled generosity, which was like a burst of warm sunshine. One would think to see her in action that she was really enjoying herself. Even when she received a curt refusal the smile did not come off. The rebuff seemed but to give added zest to her efforts. The boys tried to dodge her; for she was so popular with them that, once they were caught, they immediately capitulated. As I watched her on more than one occasion the thought came to me that while we have eulogized the Little Sisters of the Poor, who gladly bear opprobrium for sweet charity's sake, we have not perhaps realized that the same supernatural motive supported this young girl in the performance of a task that is not too pleasant to a sensitive

nature. She has counted the cost, but she believed that if her religion was the consolation of her life, she should make some little sacrifices for it. To enjoy in private the sweets of piety and to decline to make outward profession of her faith was abhorrent to her sense of honor and gratitude. Her morning offering would be made with greater devotion on the days that would follow, for she knew that He, at Whose altar she would wear the blue ribbon on Sunday, would not let the smallest particle of her good gift escape His memory. The beauty of her passing and the honors and tokens of affection bestowed upon her in death were indeed an augury that her hope was not confounded.

The day of the event broke bright and clear. There was the usual hustle and bustle to get things in order, but by five o'clock all the wheels were running smoothly. My task was over. I knew that success was assured; so I sat down to partake of a cup of Mrs. Vallon's coffee, which tasted even better than usual. I was in humor to moralize and the following was the substance of my cogitations.

A bazaar is like the kingdom of heaven. I hasten to say that I mean the kingdom of heaven on earth.

No bazaar was ever so successfully conducted as to suggest that realm whose first law is order, and where human frailty does not exist. First of all, there are a great many children there; and their pennies and their handiwork bring results, just as do their prayers in the spiritual kingdom. Unlike Ananias and Saphira, they don't keep back any portion of what they have saved up for the church, or for what in this case is practically the same thing, candies. The poor, or rather those of modest means, are there in large numbers. Verily, it is as difficult to get a rich man into a bazaar as a camel through the traditional needle's eye. There are, nevertheless, some notable exceptions even among those who are not of the faith. The same seems to be true in regard to getting them into the Church. The majority of our converts come not as a rule from the ranks of representative citizens, well-to-do merchants, professional men and gentlemen of leisure, but from among the lowly and the socially and civically obscure. They are the other sheep who have not been drawn into the maelstrom of wordliness.

Again how suggestive of the parable of the net cast into the sea is the fish pond? All kinds of fish

are brought out, and it is interesting to watch the angels separating the good from the bad. The radiant countenance of the little girl, who has caught with her line a silver brooch, is really suggestive of celestial bliss. I cannot, I must admit, say the same of the looks or of the language of the boy who has hooked a doll's apron. Owing to the high cost of toys, the fishing has been poor this year, and, figuratively speaking, there has been no danger of capsizing the boats through the weight of the catch.

The kingdom of heaven is like, says the Scripture, to ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five foolish. The same is true of a bazaar. Each of the wise virgins sets about enthusiastically to accomplish her allotted task, whether it be to wash dishes, serve at table, sell tickets or contribute a solo to the concert. She does not drop in like a stranger for afternoon tea. She is a worker, wholly unconscious of herself, of her attire or of the impression she is making. Her one purpose is to secure the success of the bazaar. As a result, when all is over, there is joy in her heart, for she has in her lamp the oil of good works. Of the foolish ones I could, if I would, speak only in the abstract, as all the virgins at our fair were wise.

The talent table illustrates another phase of God's dealings with the individual members of His kingdom. To some He gives five talents, to others two, and to others one. He expects that all will make these talents bear fruit. The one who buries his talent is condemned. The way we should make use of God's gifts is exemplified at the talent table. Some bring their talents, and the ladies in charge see to it that they bear fruit, even a hundred-fold. But others hide their goods away either in a bank or in a attic, only to bequeath them at last to those who will not thank them for their false economy. They go out of this world spiritually poor, whereas they might, with those things that they locked up, have made to themselves friends who would have received them into everlasting dwellings.

The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. At a bazaar the leaven is the enthusiasm of a few which gradually permeates the whole parish. The net profits, which surpass the expectations of the most sanguine, are ultimately, it is true, the result of combined effort, but primarily of the energy and initiative of a little

coterie of faithful workers. The same is true of the works of zeal in the Church. All the great institutions of charity owe their inception to the religious ardour and undaunted perseverance of some individual who enkindled in the hearts of others the fire of that enthusiasm with which he was himself aglow

Of course bazaars are a nuisance. So are children. But happy is the home which has the one, and the parish that must have the other.

CHAPTER V

A CLERICAL DINNER

Then let us cherish the olden friends,
The noble, tried and true,
Friends of the Past, their memories last;
More precious far than the new!

Rev. Abram J. Ryan

EACH year, as soon as the motoring is good, I invite the neighboring pastors and some clerical friends from outside the diocese to dine with me. This I do to requite them in a measure for the hospitality which I have received at their hands, and also to promote the spirit of clerical sociability which seems to be suffering an eclipse. When the last "flivver" had arrived, about fifteen minutes after the appointed time, and the occupants had pulled out their watches and duly announced the fact that they had made it in fifty-five minutes, we sat down to a dinner of which the housekeeper afterwards remarked, "I hadn't those highfalutin dishes that were on that menu which you brought home the last time you were in the city, but I noticed that the Fathers enjoyed it."

During the early part of the meal there was a good deal of badinage directed by the younger men

towards a venerable priest who is a great favorite with them and who is familiarly known as "Father Peter." "That was a great speech that you made at the wedding breakfast last week, Father Peter." "How many townships, did you say, were in your first parish?" "We are going to keep away from you in future and tell you no more of our secrets. It would not be safe; you are getting too chummy with the Bishop since you have been made an "administrator bonorum eccleciasticorum." "Father Carey's housekeeper declares that, when you were making your visitation, she had to supply your bed with seven blankets. She says that she's thankful that His Lordship hadn't the rheumatism too, for there would be nothing but coverlets and sheets for the rest of the household."

The only reply to this and much more was, "Arrah! stop you nonsense!" The truth is that Father Peter was busy making out a toast list. He was departing from the ordinary custom of naming proposers for the toasts, merely indicating those who were to respond. It seemed to me that this was an excellent plan; for the proposer often embarrasses those who are to follow him by too eulogistic references to them and of what may be

expected of them, or by entering into a discussion of the subject himself, thereby stealing much of their thunder.

When the cigars were lit, he began; "I appeal to you, Vicar General, to severely reprimand these young men for their unseemly levity." Here he was interrupted by a chorus, "See him smiling." "Perhaps," he continued, "they think that they will make me eloquent, but I can assure you that it takes more than that to make me eloquent. We are very thankful to our host for bringing us together today, and we all hope that it will be a long time before he loses that thick head of black hair. (Laughter.) Now I want to have this affair conducted with dignity. (Hear, hear.) We have some eloquent speakers with us—I refer especially to those outside the diocese. We would like to hear from them before our Glee Club starts singing 'Old MacDonald had a Farm.' Our deanery conference is just over and I would therefore request the Fathers to avoid such subjects as Canon Law, Rubrics, Hermeneutics and the National Debt. When I was on the missions I never bothered with these things, though there were other things that did bother me. Arrah! little do these young men,

with their motors, electric heaters and lace surplices, know of the hardships that we pioneers had to endure."

"Did you see him last Sunday," said one, "with his limousine and his chauffeur! My! but he looked important." This interjection stopped the flow of reminiscences and the toast list was begun.

"The Pope" and "The King" were honored in the usual way. Then followed "The Church in Ontario." This toast called forth some very excellent speeches. The first was by the Vicar General a native son of the Province. The Vicar prefaced his remarks with a hearty laugh, which led a wag to suggest that the reason why he was so jolly was that he was continually seeing the points in jokes which he had heard in his boyhood. He painted in glowing colors the progress that Catholicity had made in this Province since the days when his fellow Highlander, Bishop MacDonald, ruled over the whole area from old St. Raphael's in Glengarry. The loyalty of the priests to their bishops, the devotion of the people to their pastors, the increasing number and excellence of our churches, educational and charitable institutions, and vast crowds of daily communicants were pointed to with pride

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as an evidence of healthy growth and a commendable Catholic spirit.

The second speaker, who was possessed of that Hibernian proclivity for starting an argument, took exception to the Vicar's rather optimistic view of the present position of Catholics in the Province. "It is always refreshing," he began, "to see a man enthusiastic and loyal to home institutions but this should not blind us to our defects. You will agree with me that religion does not consist in the external practices of devotion, which are but a means to an end, but rather in the development of the spirit of self-sacrifice and militancy. Has our Catholicity stood the test of the fiery ordeal through which we have just passed? True it is that the Church has been exalted as never before since there was a Catholic Christendom. But how is it with our English speaking Catholics in Ontario? Are they not downhearted, brooding in their tents, supinely accepting as inevitable every new curtailment of their rights as citizens? Are they living God's truth and in its strength being made free? I fear not. I fear that notwithstanding much of the appearance of piety, much feverish zeal and many external evidences of prosperity, our Catholicity in

many places lacks that stamina which can carry it unscathed through the present crisis. And why this? Because there has been too much pussy-footing, too much coquetting with heresy, too much fraternizing with the enemy, too much recognition of social movements that would reform men without any reference to dogma or the individual conscience, a sort of wholesale curing of society by external appliances, in a word a humanitarianism that would create a heaven on this earth and make men moral without the sanction of a definite belief or the aid of divine grace. The result of all this has been the obscuring of the light of faith and the dampening of that militant spirit which was never so much needed as in our day.

"Look at Ireland! I know that for men and women to kneel in a circle around prison walls or in the dust of Downing Street, with the rosary in their hands, appears very bad form to some of our timorous Catholics. To die for a principle when one might enjoy a fair measure of worldly affluence seems to them folly. To face the raging Gentiles, to say to the Premier of a mighty nation, 'We cannot forfeit our soul' seems to them the very acme of foolhardiness. Yet now, when the reign of

terror is over and the dark cloud is lifted, there is laughter and Christian gladness in the humble cottage, the lilt of the piper's tune in the hills of Kerry and ejaculations of divine praise from the lips of young men and maidens who, in greater numbers than for centuries before, are preparing themselves in convent and seminary to subdue the world to Christ."

"If we wish to share in that gladness and dispel the dark forebodings that haunt us we must be ready to suffer persecutions for Christ's sake and fight as Catholics should for that faith which is everything or nothing to them." (Hear, hear.)

"The Vicar" he continued, "has spoken of the devotion of the people to their pastors. In the main I agree with him. But it seems to me that we are developing a new type of Catholic in this country, whose attitude towards the clergy is scarcely ideal. Perhaps my experience in the old land, so noted for its reverence for the priesthood, makes me hypercritical, but I confess that I do not like the expressions "popular," "charming," "lovely" and "swell" when applied to clergymen. They seem to indicate a changed attitude towards those in authority, and possibly a changed attitude of those in authority

towards the people. The generation of yesterday looked upon the priest as the ambassador of Christ, as the Lord's anointed, as one set apart from men to offer sacrifice. They were not unconscious of the attractive, or may be repellant, nature of his personal qualities; but they seldom made these the subject of favorable or unfavorable comment, especially in the family circle. Veneration for his sacred calling forestalled any such flippancy. But we have with us now a class of persons who lay great claim to piety, who love to go to church, who love to hear Father ———— preach, who love to work for the church, who love their pastor so long as he shows due deference to them and makes no ruling contrary to their inclinations. If he offend in this way, their piety succumbs to a sudden stroke of paralysis from which it threatens not to recover. The tongues which were recently so eloquent in his praise are now most bitter in their criticism of the pastor in whom they have suddenly discovered a great many unamiable qualities."

"This same changeable temperament," said he, "reveals itself in the attitude of the family towards the religious teachers in our schools. The child is loud in his praise of the teacher till she has had

occasion to chastise him. Then there is a row. The parents are indignant and appeal to the pastor to make the sister apologize for punishing their child for no reason whatsoever. In the old days a youngster who would seek sympathy in such a case would get an extra application of the strap from the parent, but in this coddling age the source of authority seems to have been reversed, and the worm of criticism and disrespect, eating itself into the very heart of the home tree, robs the young buds of their fragrance and beauty before their petals are unfolded."

"As a rule," he concluded, "we enjoy the reverence of the men, for reverence is a manly virtue. If we do not it is often our own fault. I have sometimes wondered if we have not let the spirit of democracy carry us a little too far. When we listen to a layman boast of how familiar he is with Father So-and-So, and of what he said to him 'because, you know, I know him so well,' when we hear a young sport say as he slaps a priest on the shoulder, 'Hello! old man,' we are inclined to wonder if St. Paul's admonition to be all things to all, has not been misconstrued, or, at least, overworked." (Applause.)

When the speaker had resumed his seat the chairman, with his usual tact and good judgment in directing the discussion along live topics, remarked: "The last speaker has set the embers all aglow around this subject and while the iron is hot I would like to see some more of our difficulties hammered out. Father O'Keefe—addressing a middle-aged, thoughtful, rural pastor—we would like to hear from you."

"Since the speaker who has preceded me," he began, "has quoted from the Vicar's remarks, I will follow suit. The Vicar spoke of Bishop MacDonald. Let me remind you that he was the first Canadian bishop appointed directly by the Holy See without let or hindrance from the civil power. That was a triumph that came after fifty years of struggle. The story of that conflict covers the brightest pages of our history. Never did our Irish forefathers defend the faith and the rights of the Church with greater fortitude than did the French Canadian clergy and people under the leadership of Msgr. Plessis, the last bishop of the old historic see of Quebec. This suggests to me the debt we owe to the French and the lessons we

may learn from the sister Province to promote religion in our midst.

"We owe to the French the blood of martyrs that was the seed of our Canadian Church. We owe to them the atmosphere of Catholicity that pervades our land; for the names of their heroes and of their patron saints are upon our lakes and rivers, our mountains and our prairies, our cities and our shrines. The religious training of us older men was, I might say, a donation from the Fathers of St. Sulpice. Our new institutions turn out, it is true, very irreproachable young clerics, but we graduates of the Grand Seminary of Montreal will always treasure the memory of that City of Mary with its centuries of traditions, and of those saintly reverend gentlemen of old France. Lastly we owe to French Canada our political stability and many of the religious and educational rights which we possess and which we would enjoy in fuller measure if there were a more cordial co-operation between the races." (Hear, hear.)

"What can our people learn from French Canada? They can first of all learn to comply with the divine injunction "Increase and multiply and fill the land." In six contiguous parishes in this diocese embracing

a Catholic population of 1,200 families there were last year 25 marriages, while in one French Canadian parish of 150 families, 35 nuptials were celebrated in the same period. If we rural pastors are suffering boredom, if we can do little save say Mass and bury the dead in the skeletons of parishes out of which the young blood has gone, it is because our people are not attached to the paternal acres, because our system of education divorces the young folk from their homes, because they have not learned to create their own amusement, to generate light with their own magnetos instead of being supplied with a storage battery in the form of phonographs, movies and such like.

Finally we can learn to develop, as far as our educational facilities will permit, Catholic leaders among the laity, who will be able to explain our position and defend our rights in the halls of parliament and in other public forums. In replying to the toast "The Church in Ontario" I can only voice the hope that the day is not far distant when our own lay representatives will have the moral courage and the intellectual equipment to represent us as honorably before our non-Catholic fellow citizens as do those

cultured gentlemen from Quebec, through the medium of to them an alien tongue."

When the applause which greeted the speaker had subsided, on a hint from the chair it was moved seconded and carried unanimously that, as this was an informal affair, the remainder of the toast list be dispensed with. Then followed a vote of thanks to the host and the chairman, and last but not least to the Vicar whose remarks had served as a text for such an interesting discussion.

CHAPTER VI

A SICK CALL

Lo, in the Sanctuaried East
Day, a dedicated priest
In all his robes pontifical exprest
Lifteth slowly, lifteth sweetly,
From out its Orient tabernacle drawn
Yon orbed Sacrament confest
Which sprinkles benediction thro' the dawn!

Francis Thompson

JUST as catechism class was dismissed this afternoon, I received word that an old man, who lived back in the valley, and whom I had received into the Church a year ago, was dangerously ill. In his earlier days he had been a Bible Christian, and was very assiduous in reading the "Good Book." Of a mild and retiring disposition, he seldom expressed himself very strongly on any subject, and he had been so afflicted with asthma that he could now only speak in a whisper. What was my surprise then when, after giving him the Apostolic Blessing, he raised himself up in his bed and taking my hand he exclaimed in a voice that was resonant and in words that might have come from the lips of a St. Augustine, "I thank God,

Father, that He has given me the grace to know the truth and to embrace it before I die."

The weather was so inviting that, on leaving the house, I decided to take a walk up to the top of Monkey Mountain. The view from the summit amply repaid me for the labor of the ascent. The slanting rays of the declining sun brought out in bold relief every prominent object in the town, along the miles of shore line, in the undulating valley which slopes down to the eastward, and even on the distant hills of the neighboring township. The placid bosom of the lake, undisturbed by wind or sail, was covered as with a sheet of silver, and the drowsy stillness of a Sunday afternoon held everything in its thrall.

As I reclined upon a grassy knoll, I fell to meditating upon what had just happened, and the thought occurred to me: what about the eternal salvation of the multitude in the valley? In most centres of population in Ontario, they constitute the great majority; and Crofton is decidely no exception to the rule. I have mingled with them for the past twenty years. I have met them at their games and their clubs, their social and literary functions, on the street and in the marketplace. I number many

of them among my intimate friends, and my affection goes out to the generation of beautiful children whom I have seen grow up to manhood and to womanhood. A community of interests and the intimate associations of town life beget a kindly feeling on the part of every citizen of good heart towards the members of the same civic family. But in the case of a priest this is intensified by his sacerdotal instinct and by the marks of reverence and confidence which he receives from many who are not of the fold.

If one were to judge them by their regard for the natural virtues, he could be very optimistic about their eternal welfare; for they are seemingly honest, sober, respectable and benevolent. Of course there are crooks, misers and libertines among them; but the same are to be found in the ranks of nominal Catholics. But the catechism reminded me that I must weigh them in a different balance. It is true that only angels may judge men; but one may presume to form a judgment, in the light of faith, of various types of men.

There are certain things which must be considered in passing this judgment that we may be orthodox and at the same time charitable. In recent years

there has been a decided change in the attitude of non-Catholics towards the Church. From a social and political standpoint she is being attacked even more bitterly than in the past, but controversies on points of doctrine are becoming very rare. The original teaching of our separated brethren was that faith was the essential thing and that works counted for nothing. Their present attitude is the very antithesis of this. Now, it does not matter what you believe so long as you lead a good life. Some Catholics are deceived in imagining that this abandonment of attack upon Catholic doctrine is due to a spirit of tolerance, whereas it is a necessary withdrawal from a position which is recognized to be no longer tenable. This cessation of hostilities is also due to the fact that Protestants no longer consider doctrine of sufficient importance to quarrel about it. Religious controversies, though they had many disagreeable features, were at least an evidence of life. It were foolish for us to suppose that, because Catholic doctrine is not attacked, the attitude of the world towards it is becoming more friendly. True it is that many have embraced the faith in recent years and that many ministers, whose sincerity we have no reason to

doubt, say many complimentary things about our holy religion which are duly acknowledged. This interchange of compliments has blinded many Catholics to the evil of heresy which is all the more dangerous to all parties concerned, because it has ceased to be religiously militant.

Again, in viewing this subject, we should never lose sight of this fundamental truth that the ordinary means of salvation instituted by Our Divine Lord is membership in His visible Church, and that all who are saved outside of the body of the Church are saved by extraordinary means. Furthermore, these extraordinary means are only applicable in the case of those who, through no fault of their own, are outside the body of the Church, and thereby deprived of the efficacious graces of the sacraments. Those who are guilty of wilful heresy are guilty of one of the most grievous of sins. St. Jerome says there is nothing that so far separates a man from God as formal heresy. The reason for this is that it springs from pride, which is especially detestable in the sight of God. The moral law demands of us the homage of our heart; while faith demands the homage of our intellect. Unwillingness to submit our intelligence to God is

all the more sinful because it is our noblest faculty, and because we thereby repudiate the testimony of Him Who is Truth Itself. A man may be honoured in the community, esteemed for his natural virtues of honesty and benevolence; his courteous and gracious manners may have won for him a host of friends, but if he has wilfully rejected the gift of faith he is not in the way of salvation. With these truths made clear we will proceed to the diagnosis.

First of all there is the hail-fellow-well-met, the suave, good natured, popular citizen. He takes little interest in religion. His occasional attendance at church is merely conventional. His business and his recreations claim all the attention and energies of his soul. Ah! how he recalls to one's mind that old Bible story of Jacob and Esau. He is the Esau of our day, caring little for spiritual benedictions or for a supernatural inheritance—which pehaps he had never claimed, for many such are not baptized—and content to be rewarded for his natural virtues by the fat of the land. He is the worldling that Christ anathematized. If we were of the world he would love us; but he does not love us. It is true that he is loud in his profession of tolerance, and that he does not rail against us;

but he raises no finger of protest when we are calumniated. Few sincere converts are made from this class. Some of them go through the formality, or at least subscribe to the solemn promises, to win the hand of a good but foolish Catholic girl, who confides in the honor and broadmindedness of her intended. Alas! in most cases comes sad disillusionment and a broken heart.

Then there is the militant Protestant to whom Rome is an anathema, who is quite sincere in his own convictions and who denounces the errors of the "scarlet woman" with all the zeal of a Saul of Tarsus.

Unfortunately his name is not legion today. This is especially unfortunate for us, for his opposition was a spur to our faith. It has been truly said that an honest man is the noblest work of God. Honesty is the distinctive mark of the individual of this type. However misguided he may be, he is honest not only in the restricted significance of the word in being just and honorable is his business relations, but in the much more important matter of following the dictates of his conscience in regard to the worship of God. He has not stifled the instinct of religion in his heart; he is a religious man.

But the abandonment of belief in the supernatural in the Protestant churches has dampened his ardor, left him tossed about by every wind of doctrine and drifting often into infidelity. Converts from this class are comparatively few but, like St. Paul, they are genuine. When one of these embraces the truth he brings to the service of the Church a generosity and an enthusiasm which puts to shame the spiritual indolence and the ingratitude of many who have grown up from childhood in their Father's house, an enthusiasm which can be expressed only in the words of St. Augustine "Too late have I known thee, too late have I loved thee, first and only fair."

Lastly, there is the pious, God-fearing soul who is outside the body of the Church through no fault of his own, who has never been guilty of the sin of heresy. His education and his associations have prevented him from considering the claims of a Church which locally may not be impressive, and of whose doctrines and of whose history he has a mistaken conception. Like the Samaritans of old he is told by his spiritual guides "Go not up to Jerusalem, for your gods are here." Once the barriers of distrust and prejudice have been broken

down and the priest can get in touch with him, he finds fruitful soil for the sowing of the word. I would like to believe, and have reason to believe, that the kindly old Scotch lady who gave me hot biscuits on my way from school, the honest old neighbor in whom there was no guile, and the many sincere friends of my youth and maturer years, who have shared with me the joys and sorrows of the little world in which we have moved, will receive grace and mercy from the Saviour of us all. We must not, however, lose sight of the fact that just as unbaptized children are deprived of the Beatific Vision through no fault of their own, so, in like manner, these sincere souls may not drink of the sacramental fountains of grace, may not know the spiritual exhilaration which comes from a good confession, or may not share in the indulgences which Church offers to her children. The thought of this sad privation should make us doubly grateful for God's gratuitous gift to us and prompt us to pray earnestly that they too may share in it. Only the priest who has had dealings with converts knows what beautiful souls there are among these "other sheep," like him I had just anointed and many others here in Crofton.

The thought occurred to me, as it must have often to every priest; What are we Catholics doing for these? It is true that, remaining as they are, they may save their souls; but, deprived of the abundance of grace and light, the task is difficult. And then what of their posterity? Realizing the mental attitude of so many of those in the valley beneath me and the condition of our own forces, I came to the conclusion that there was little hope in the immediate future for any great conquest of souls. We must wait and pray. Why? Because so many Catholics have not the spirit of a soldier of Christ and are not armed as a soldier of Christ should be.

We will never convert the world with an army of merely sacramental Catholics, that is men and women who are selfishly satisfied in keeping their own house in order but who evince no zeal to share their good gift with others. A citizen who, when his country is at war, would neither enlist as an active participant, provide for those who are at the front nor even scan the bulletin board to see how it was faring with the nation's forces along the far-flung battle line, could not be called loyal. In like manner, a Catholic who does not support the missions or who never reads a Catholic paper to

see what progress is being made at home or in the fields afar cannot be said to have the militant spirit.

Citizens of the State are not all soldiers, but every Catholic should be a soldier; he was made one by Confirmation. As a soldier he should be armed. But the armor, both offensive and defensive, of too many Catholics is defective. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is dull and rusty. That is they are not equipped to give a definite reason for the faith that is in them. Their breastplate of justice is perforated. While professing Christ with their lips they deny Him by their works. There are too many holes in their armor through which the hostile arrows of criticism may enter. Lastly, their helmet of faith is corroded by the pestilential atmosphere of heresy.

This last statement may need some corroboration. I do not mean to say that there are any formal heretics within the fold, that is those who wilfully and knowingly would deny any article of Catholic faith. But are there not material heretics, persons so affected by the atmosphere of unbelief in which they live that by word and act they seem to give consent to doctrines which are contrary to faith? Let us see.

There is an old aberration called Pelagianism, which was condemned by the Council of Carthage in the fifth century, but which is very much alive today. Pelagius taught that there was no such thing as Original Sin, and that we could get to heaven by the exercise of our own natural powers without the aid of divine grace. Have we Pelagians in the fold? We certainly have. Who are they? Here are some of them—the mother who delays for months the baptism of her child; those who criticize our Italian and Polish Catholics for making such an ado about a christening; the Catholic wife who is quite assured of the salvation of her Protestant husband and who makes no effort to convert him because he happens to be naturally good and kind to her; the person who goes to his duty only once a year and then only to avoid censure, and the man who relies more upon legal enactments, social uplift, secular education and hygiene to reform society than upon the grace of the sacraments.

In our day when virtue is so often made a cloak for malice, and when the leaven of hypocrisy has permeated the whole public life of the country, should we not pay heeed to the warning of our

Lord, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees"? Are Catholics wholly free from modern Phariseeism? Are not sins of human weakness which shock the moral sense of the whited sepulchres of uplift, who are the creators of public opinion, more severely judged by us than even a deliberate denial of the faith? Are not many of our people more willing to claim fellowship with the wealthy, vain, but outwardly respectable, nominal Catholic, who is recreant to his faith, than with his sin-scarred brother who would scorn to barter his birthright, who had aimed at a high rung in the ladder of perfection and having fallen cries out in humble consciousness of his spiritual degradation "O Lord be merciful to me a sinner," and renews again his efforts?

Our Lord was kind to repentant sinners, despite the jeers of the Pharisees. Holy Church, true to the spirit of her Divine Founder, never casts out even those who are unrepentant, but bears the disgrace which their lives reflect upon her, ever hoping and praying, like a fond mother, that they may some day turn from the empty cisterns of sin to the fountain of living waters. Before we can hope to make any advance, before we can wield

with success the sword of the Word, we must cultivate the spirit of Christ. We must divest ourselves of servility, phariseeism and human respect, and develop a genuine Catholic mentality befitting a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people destined to declare His virtues, Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

The sound of the angelus bell aroused me from my reverie. On entering the presbytery the housekeeper informed me that a message had just arrived that the old man was dead.

CHAPTER VII

AT THE TWELFTH STATION

And the torchlight touched the pale hair,
Where silver clouded gold;
And the frame of his face was made of cords
And a young lord turned among the lords
And said: "The King is old!"

Gilbert K. Chesterton

I PAID a visit recently to a venerable pastor whose eyes have looked out for over eighty years upon life's comedies and tragedies. The housekeeper informed me that he was in the church. As I silently entered the sacred edifice, I beheld a scene which would have delighted the genius of a Titian. The rich rays of a golden sunset streaming through the stained glass windows formed a halo around the silvered locks of the aged priest, as he looked up into the face of his dying Saviour. The Way of the Cross, which he had so often made, was nearly completed. Yes, and the day of his own life was drawing to a close. The sunset was nigh at hand. It was the cross which had solved for him life's enigma, sheltering him when he bore the burdens and the heats of the day, and now supporting and solacing his declining years with their "labor et dolor."

The priesthood is sublime, but there is something supremely sublime about an aged priest who has outlived his contemporaries, who is the last of the old brigade and still in the midst of the fray. He dwells in two worlds, the world of yesterday, in which his memory wonders, and the world of today in which he still plays his part, sharing the burdens and the joys of the young levites who surround him.

My first impressions of the priesthood were received from one of these stalwarts of the old school. The church in which our family heard Mass was at that time one of three mission churches attended from a central station where the priest resided. There are now four parishes in the district. We had Mass only every second Sunday; so I saw little of the priest. I have a very vivid recollection of him as he strode up the main aisle with his heavy valise in his hand. I would have scarcely believed it if I were told that he had once been a boy and played marbles, much less that he ever played truant from school to go swimming. I pictured him as a venerable Melchisedech, without father, without mother, without genealogy, a being from another world who was of a different

nature from the men whom I knew. He was the personification of reverence and reserve. His speech was always measured and dignified and he invariably began his announcement with "You will observe." I do not know if he was a very learned man, but he bore that reputation, and I remember being informed very gravely that he and his bishop always conversed in Greek when they met. This I do know, however, that he left upon the families of those missions the imprint of Catholicity which has not been effaced to this day.

We have travelled far since those times. We have societies and devotions that were unheard of by the pioneers; but I often wonder if in the things which are worth while, we are richer than they. When I recall families who used to drive seven and even ten miles to Mass, go to confession and Communion and return to their homes before breaking their fast, I ask myself the question; are their descendants ready to make a similar sacrifice? No one will gainsay the value and expediency of the frequent reception of the sacraments which is more common in our day, but when I see men or women forego those sacraments because their reception would cause them a little inconvenience, I doubt if they

ever seriously consider how much it cost Our Lord to institute them. Again when I have seen a young lad going to Communion in a swimming suit and trousers so as to save himself the trouble of changing his attire, I have felt that not only was the letter of the law laid down in the Catechism violated, but that there was a lack of that spirit of reverence which actuated those who received perhaps less frequently but who looked upon going to Communion as a great event which called for due preparation and decorum.

These were some of the thoughts which passed through my mind as I knelt in the rear pew. I slipped out before the pastor had finished his devotions and awaited his greeting at the presbytery. He was attired in silk hat and frock coat. He always wore them. Some keep them only for such an occasion as a bishop's funeral. Not so, our friend. He believed that they were the proper appurtenances of the priesthood. It is true that they do not lend themselves to the designs of a good mixer. They are too conspicuous in a crowd. But a priest is not of the crowd and the more reminders he has of that, the better. They stand, too, for a type of priesthood, which, whatever may have

been its failings and foibles, maintained a dignity and exercised a prestige which made Catholicity respected and the Church a power to be reckoned with instead of being an humble supplicant for justice.

We talked long that evening, or at least my companion did; for he was in a reminiscent mood. As I motored home in the moonlight there were flashed upon the canvas of my imagination many visions of the past. I saw the early settlers drawing stone with horses and oxen to build their churches. I took in once again the annual picnic, with its abundance and its jollity. I saw the log drives coming down the river and the lake dotted with sails. I saw a country teeming with abundance and vibrant with life. But there is a stillness now, a spirit of sadness brooding over the land, which suggests a grove despoiled of its songsters.

Where are the boys and girls of yesteryear? Many of them are in large American cities or in our own centres of population, putting forth, in most instances, such energy as, if employed at home, would have made the countryside bloom as the rose. More are in the Egypt of the West, lead thither by the lure of riches and adventure. The

young Josephs of the East had visions. One saw an ocean of sheaves on the prairie, another a multitude of fat kine on the foothills, paying him homage. Some of these saw their dreams come true. Other members of the family, hearing that there was wheat in Alberta, journeyed westward like the sons of Jacob of old. Even the young Benjamins were sent for. To complete the parallel they had to pass through the desert, a desert of rock and stunted poplar, before they came not to the Red Sea but to the Red River, which is really the dividing line between the East and the West. They found wheat, it is true, but they had to endure labors and privations and, hardest of all, that tugging at the heartstrings, for the old home and the familiar faces were far away, and, alas, too often the Church of their childhood. But it is now their home, and they will not come back to Canaan.

The farmers who remain have larger bank accounts than of yore, and their homes are much more pretentious. They travel now in automobiles instead of in the family democrat; but there is not the same happy, care-free spirit among them that enlivened the social evenings and the parish gatherings of the past. I have often wondered if the

exodus, which we so much deplore, is due so much to economic reasons as to the influence of the puritanical spirit upon our home life. I do not know how my readers may feel about it, maybe is is merely subjective on my part—an evidence perhaps of advancing years—but I have come to the conclusion that, altogether apart from certain legal enactments, this country is becoming a pretty dry place. Successive waves of moral reform have pretty much dried up the nation's gladness. The good old Anglo-Saxon word "fun" might just as well be expugned from the dictionary. Of course there is plenty of fun of a kind such as watching the grimaces of some slap-stick comedian or the antics of those reverent youths, the Katzenjammer Kids; but the innocent merriment of the old-fashioned home that was indulged in by father, mother and children, and the beaux, who came to see the girls, is fast disappearing. It is a common thing now to see little lassies taking love strolls with boys scarcely out of knickerbockers; but young people, when they come to the age when they should keep company, often do so surreptitiously as if there were blame attached to it. This is, I belive, especially true of our young Irish Catholics. There is often no

fun in the home; for, owing to the unreasonable attitude of parents, the son may not introduce his sweetheart there, and the daughter must meet hers elsewhere. This frequently occurs when the young couple are of the same parish, have known each other from childhood and would be well suited to travel life's journey together.

In some parishes the praiseworthy and characteristically Irish twin virtues of sociability and hospitality are still perpetuated. These are to be congratulated; for a gloomy atmosphere in the home tends to disrupt it, and is not conducive to the practice of virtue. The birds sing, the lambs gambol, the waves ripple with laughter and the sunbeams dance upon the waters and play hide-and-seek among the foliage. We should learn a lesson from nature's children, and banish the dour spirit that would dry up the fountains of fun and affection of which the home should be the well-spring.

But I have wandered from my subject. I began to write about our pioneer priests, and lo and behold, I find myself discussing the perennial problem which our good Bishop has appointed a clerical committee to investigate. Let me suggest that

they bring in a recommendation that the spirit of sociability be fostered among our people, and that some zealous pastors relax a little themselves and set an example of the practice of this virtue.

Is it lave gaiety all to the laity?
Cannot the clergy be Irishmen, too?

CHAPTER VIII

BY THE PURLING BROOK

I love the white-capped, peaceful clouds, so still,
That travel down the blue aisles of the day,
Like young life's pure-souled hopes, fresh in the play
Of golden sunbeams, shooting 'cross the hill.
I love the small voice of the little rill,
So baby-like crooning a welcome gay.

Dr. Fischer

THEY say that it is a good thing for a clergyman to have a hobby. I admit that mine is fishing. I have very little compunction in making this confession, for I contend that fishing is a very orthodox hobby. Is not the picture of a man holding a line in the water suggestive of hope and faith? Were not the first Apostles fishermen? Did not St. Peter say, after he had been called to the apostolate and on the very eve of that memorable day when on the shore of the lake of Genesareth, he was commissioned by our Lord to feed His lambs and to feed His sheep—did he not say "I go a fishing"? And did not his companions, among whom were Thomas and Nathaniel and the two sons of Zebedee, reply "We also come with thee"? The context adds "That night they caught nothing." This I might say, in passing, is one of the few authentic fish stories.

In early Christian symbolism the fish played a very important part. The Greek word for fish "Ichthus" of which the motto I.H.S., so familiar to us, is an abbreviation, stood for a brief profession of faith among the early Christians, forming as it did the initial letters of the Greek words which translated would read "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour." It was also used as symbol of the Eucharist, no doubt in reference to the preparatory miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. I have often wondered if it was a mere coincidence that so many of the Apostles were fishermen, or whether their calling in some way fitted them to be "fishers of men" and predisposed their chief for the office of "Pilot of the Bark of Peter" making his seal the emblem of orthodoxy.

But, as far as I am concerned, all this, I must confess, is on a par with the grave reasons which a Scotchman puts forth for taking a glass of "mountain dew." I have been a disciple of Isaac Walton since I was a youngster because I like the recreation. Among the treasured memories of my boyhood are the old fishing holes in the Trent River, the juniper bush under which I hid my pole and line, the roar of the waters as they rushed over the falls and the

electric shocks that came when the fish were biting.

Nor has my ardor abated a whit since then. At this season of the year I like to hie me to some sequestered brook in search of the elusive trout. I know of nothing more restful and refreshing to the senses than the odor of bough and shrub and blossom, the smell of the plentiful field that once delighted the nostrils of the patriarch Jacob, the bright galaxy of fresh colors with which the Master Artist has just adorned nature, and the dulcet sounds of twittering birds and of purling waters as from crystal sources in the distant hillside they go on forever through woodland and vale, now coyly hiding in shady nook and then, as with a gust of laughter, dashing out into the open sunlight adown the filtering gravel beds.

These peregrinations of mine bring me into contact with a class of people who dwell not only far from towns and cities, but even from the rural telephone, and the daily mail route. They spend the greater part of their time altogether apart from the busy world and are little influenced by the forces, good or evil, which are moulding society to-day. They present, therefore, an interesting subject.

Trout Fishing

One meets among these people two types which merit our thoughtful consideration. The first is repellant. As I approached the home to ask the way to a certain place, I thought of that little poem of Kilmer's, "The House with Nobody In It." The shingles broken and black, windows stuffed with rags, and the cold, vacant look that comes from the absence of vines, or curtain, or blind or flower pot suggested that the roof did not shelter life. Ah, but it did. Kilmer was wrong. "The saddest sight" is not "a house with nobody in it," "a house with a broken heart," but men, women and children in whose eyes there is no ray of intelligence, in whose faces there is no gladness and in whose hearts there is no hope, who seem to have little to live for, and, sadder still, nothing to die for. On nearer approach my eye caught sight of a human form, an old granny, stooped and withered with years and hardships, seated on a log near the wood-pile and looking down into the chips. A rap at the door was followed by a shuffling within. Soon it was opened and a sad and disgusting sight was revealed—a woman still young, but haggard and careworn, three half-clad children looking up at me with a gawky stare as they cling to their mother's

skirts, a table littered with unwashed dishes and scraps of food, and a floor covered with rags and filth. It is such homes as this, which unfortunately are becoming too numerous in rural Ontario, that are responsible for those unnatural crimes which prove that seclusion is no security for virtue.

The next scene is brighter. I had ventured along a concession line which was seldom traversed and had not gone far before I got stalled in the mud. A farmer who was working in his field some distance away, seeing my predicament, unloosed his team and drew me out. When I offered to pay him he declined to accept anything, adding, "Just remember me when you are on your knees." Here is the type of Protestant of which there are many in the country. They are devoid of bigotry, for the professional fomenters of bigotry have abandoned them for more lucrative fields. It is true that they may don their regalia on the Twelfth of July, but the day is for them merely a holiday. One year when the annual celebration was taking place in Crofton, a number of them visited the Catholic church. I volunteered to show them around and I found their attitude most respectful. They possess a spirit of reverence for God, His holy word and sacred

things, for they are unacquainted with pulpit vaudeville and do not see at the church doors the Sunday announcements which surpass, for sensationalism and irreverence, the movie advertisements. They are nature's children endowed with that goodness of heart, that respect for God's laws and that instinct of worship which the Creator stamped upon them. They offer a fruitful field for missionary endeavour.

On another occasion, happening to be in the neighborhood of an old friend, I decided to pay her a visit. I had met her at the convent school. She was the product of a good Catholic country home, innocent, artless, natural. Though a little shy and backward at first, she soon adjusted herself to her new surroundings. Her brightness of intellect and good rudimentary training made it comparatively easy for her to take a foremost place in her class, while she delighted in the facilities which were offered her to satisfy the devotional cravings of her heart. Four years quickly sped past, and now, blooming into young womanhood, she seemed on graduation night among the white-robed maidens the fairest of the throng. She had married a young farmer of the same parish and was now mistress

of a home of her own. It was an unpretentious frame building but there was a bright cozy, home-like air about it. A freshly painted picket fence separated the well kept lawn from the public road, and a flower bed extended along either side of the gravel walk that led up to the verandah.

My rap on the door was answered by a bright, curly-haired little girl, who informed me that Mama had gone to the field to take a lunch to the men and had left her in charge of her little brother and the baby that was in the cradle. She invited me to take a chair in the parlor until her mother would return. Unlike that particular room in so many farm houses, there was nothing in the atmosphere suggestive of a morgue. It was well ventilated and there was plenty of light. The furniture was not of that type which is intended only to be an ornament—and is not always that. It was fairly rich and serviceable. The paper on the walls was of a light, delicate tint, that gave an added cheerfulness. Here and there were hung neatly-framed or passepartouted pictures of members of the family and several photo copies of distinctively Catholic paintings of the old masters. In a word, that room reflected the good judgment, the culture, the

refinement and above all the faith and piety of her who had fashioned it.

The little one came running in to announce that Mama was coming. Doffing her sunshade, without any preliminaries or excuses she extended to me a cheery welcome. Certainly no apologies were necessary, for in her well-fitting gingham dress, I doubt if she looked any more attractive the night of her graduation. After some enquiries about old friends, she turned to what interested her most —her home. She took me out to show me her chickens and the geese of which she was justly proud. I was informed in confidence that the revenue from this source alone defrayed a great part of the household expense and enabled her to procure many little luxuries for the home. Then I must see the little garden which was her own exclusive charge, and which furnished vegetables in season for the table. Why should not the men have lettuce and radishes and even cucumbers and green onions to give an added relish to their repasts?

While my hostess was preparing dinner little Mary entertained me. She informed me that she would be seven years old on her next birthday, that she was going to go to school after the holidays,

and that she was preparing to make her First Communion. I drew from her the whole story of Bethlehem and Nazareth, which she had learned from her mother. We were quite deep in Theology when the wife brought in her husband to introduce him. I found him quite alert and self-possessed. In the course of our conversation I gleaned that he was in love with his work and quite au courant of latest scientific methods of farming; that he and his wife studied and discussed these matters together and that she was of great assistance to him in outlining his plans. He was well informed, too, on current events and especially interested in their bearing on Catholicity. He was expressing his indigation at the Mexican atrocities when dinner was announced.

It was indeed an appetizing meal. A bouquet of fresh flowers stood in the centre of the table. Everything was tastily arranged and spotlessly clean. Even the hired man, whose hair was elaborately brushed and combed, seemed to have caught the contagion of cleanliness and neatness. The food was wholesome and well-cooked, and served to the accompaniment of cheerful conversation and good-humoured badinage. In response

to a remark that I understood from Father Smith that he was about to make some needed improvements in the church, I found my host and hostess enthusiastic. The latter informed me that she had already in her spare moments made several articles for the bazaar which would be held the next winter to raise funds for the purpose. Happy, I thought to myself, would be the priest that had a parish of such families, and happy the farmer who possesses such a wife!

As I proceeded on my journey to the fishing grounds my mind turned to the question of rural convents. No one would say that a man could not be a good lawyer or doctor who had not a liberal education to build upon; but all will agree that he would be much more proficient in his calling if he had. The same applies to convent training. But, alas, our convents are too few and their capacity too limited. Ah! there's the rub. Why is it that rural Quebec is not only holding its own but making very substantial advancement? Does not the principal cause lie in the fact that the majority of the farmers' wives in that Province have been educated in one or other of the many convents scattered throughout the country? They bring with them

a sense of the beautiful, an indescribable atmosphere of refinement, a technical knowledge of their work, and withal a spirit of practical piety that makes the unpretentious whitewashed cottage cheery and attractive, that makes the home, what it should be, a sanctuary of devotion and a school of knowledge and culture.

If the Church is to grow stronger in the country or even hold its own, if we are to keep the boys on the farm, we must have convent schools not alone in our cities and large towns but in every rural centre. These schools must not be what many of our present ones are of necessity, mere factories for turning out certificates, but institutions where farmers' daughters may acquire technical knowledge —call it Domestic Science if you will—but above all that artistic and devotional training which a convent alone can give. In a word we must train our country girls to take their places as competent mistresses of rural homes. If we do this we need not worry about the boys. They will stay on the farm.

My arrival at the fisherman's house cut short my reflections. It would have been an ideal home if only there were something more running around

it than a picket fence. It had about it that air of cleanliness which is akin to godliness and that neatness which is suggestive of heaven's first law. The family, though far from church and not in possession of an auto, are at Mass regularly. The visitor from the city may say to himself, "What a lonesome life these people must lead!" But he is mistaken. Their existence is enlivened by much more variety than his. They are content and happy within the little circle of their worldly interests and within the broad, golden circle of their religious communings. They hold daily converse with our Lord and His saints whose pictures adorn their living room, and they look upon the face of the Soggarth, who had been their councellor, friend and inspiration, and patiently follow the path that he trod. They are brothers and sisters advanced in years—the father and mother are long since dead—but the light of youth is in their eyes and a whimsical humor plays around their lips.

"Now you go up the creek," says Peter, "and I'll go down and see how we'll make out." I call him Peter, for he is a good fisherman. I will not say how I succeeded, for I do not like to boast, but Peter returned with a dozen or more beauties

which he revealed with that quizzical smile which meant "Victors can afford to be silent."

God bless you Peter! You know not how favoured you are. Many a grand dame and merchant prince would give all their golden store for your simple homely joys, your contentment and your faith in the things unseen.

CHAPTER IX

IN A CONVENT GARDEN

In the nuns' garden lean the lilies slender,
And many a flower adorns the gay parterres;
But sweeter still the souls so fair and tender
Who waft to God the perfume of their prayers!

Denis A. McCarthy

THERE was a religious reception at the mother-house of St. Joseph's Community the day after the Assumption. This is an annual event; but what is by no means an annual occurance was the reception of the habit by one of the young ladies of Crofton. I was invited to be present, and honored and embarrassed by being asked by His Lordship to be one of the assistants in the ceremony. The Mass was said, the habits were blessed, the vows were spoken, and then followed congratulations to the novices and professed from clergy, relatives and friends.

From a human standpoint, what I found most interesting was the aftermath, the little family reunions in the convent garden. Father, mother, big brother and sister and the baby girl of the family had come to see Gertrude take the veil. During the Mass they prayed and wondered and were

impressed by the unusual solemnity. They wept a little, but very quietly, when the choir sang "Go ye forth, O Sion's Daughters" and their loved one in bridal attire left the chapel to don the sombre habit. The words of the preacher and of the officiating Bishop consoled them but still further accentuated the fact that she, who was so recently a member of their household, was theirs no longer but wholly consecrated to God's service. She could not return with them, but at the least they could gather round her; they could have her all to themselves for a brief hour before departing for their home.

I am not privileged to say what words were spoken there in the shade of the maple; for I would have deemed it an intrusion to have entered the little circle. I suspect, however, that the conversation was about very ordinary matters. It is ever thus. In the most solemn moments we talk of trifles, when we are really thinking of the days of old and have in mind the eternal years. The good mother, as a sort of relief to her pent up feelings, no doubt discoursed volubly of the news of home and the parish and of the plans that her husband and sons were making for the coming year; and

the novice listened with attention, for religion does not destroy but sanctify human affections and human interests. The big sister told of the gossip of the neighborhood; and again the novice listened, for feminine curiosity cannot be wholly discarded with the superfluity of hair. I wondered why that big sister had so many fits of crying. I suspect that it was the result of conflicting emotions. She thought of the scene of the morning, so suggestive of self-sacrifice, of heavenly love and unearthly peace; and then she remembered a plighted word. Never mind, she will dry her tears when she meets him, and she will play Martha's role all the better for that partial revelation of the joys of Mary. The little tot was silent for a long time, looking first at one and then at the other. At last she unbosomed herself by the question: "Gertrude, may I be a flower girl the next time?" I would not say that this indicated a vocation to the religious life, any more than do the protestations of certain habitués on these occasions that they think it is just too lovely for anything to be a nun

The member of the group who elicited my sympathy most of all was the father. They do not say much, these Irish fathers but "they do be thinking

long." That is why I felt for this particular head of the family. A woman more readily relieves her mind by giving vent in words to her joys and sorrows, but the silent man is often misunderstood. The calloused hands and the bronzed features told of years of strenuous labor, while the merry twinkle in the eye revealed the heart of a boy and the dignified bearing bespoke the soul of a Catholic gentleman. He had seen the little olive branches springing up around his table, and now one of them has been transplanted in the garden of the Lord. He begrudges it not. He rejoices in it. It is at least the beginning of the consummation of his life's work. The development has been quite natural—the Catholic home with its family devotions and reverence for everything pertaining to religion, the parish pew with the little ones kneeling with their parents every Sunday before the altar, and lastly, regular and frequent reception of the Sacraments, often at the price of long fastings and great exertions. Perhaps his children did not enjoy the advantages of a Catholic school. Many priestly and religious vocations have developed in such an environment; so true it is that the genuine Catholic home is the true nursery of vocations and

that not even the advantages of a Catholic school can overcome the evil influence of worldly parents or the lack of home training.

Glancing over the various groups, I was struck by the fact that these fathers, were for the most part, tillers of the soil. The successful merchant, the lawyer, the doctor and the gentleman of leisure had few representatives. Too many of their daughters, who had enjoyed superior advantages, were aiming only at social laurels, even, perhaps, at the sacrifice of faith itself. It is hard to account for the fact that cities and towns supply so few vocations. It cannot be attributed wholly to worldliness; for there are plenty of virtuous and self-sacrificing young men and women in our cities. It would seem that it is due to the distractions which tend to disrupt home life, and to the spirit of independence which comes from the ability of bright young people to earn large salaries. These allurements keep them in the maelstrom of commercial life till youth is gone.

There is perhaps a special reason why some young ladies are not attracted to our diocesan community. Even in the spiritual sphere, a girl loves what is romantic. Green fields are far away and even

spiritual castles are in Spain. To teach the neighbors' children, to minister to a patient who had known her as a child and who refers to her as "John Leahy's daughter," in a word to furnish cheap labor in local educational and charitable institutions, is rather subversive of airy girlish dreams. "If I were to become a nun" said one to me, "I would like to join some historic community which would link me up with the traditions of the saints and heroes of the past." This was rather an unkind cut to the great Saint of Nazareth; but I understood what she meant. She was laboring under the very common delusion that there was nothing particularly romantic about the Sisterhood of St. Joseph. Let me for a moment turn on the searchlight of history that the reader may behold something of the radiance of the golden sheen that surrounds that humble veil and guimpe to us so familiar and so revered.

I take it that three of the essential ingredients of romance are ancient lineage, dramatic incident and illustrious associations. The Community of St. Joseph can lay claim to all of these in a superlative degree. In conception or design, it is the oldest congregation of women in Canada; while its actual

or official establishment took place only twelve years after the founding of the Ursulines of Quebec in 1639. I have said that it is the oldest in conception. The illustrious St. Francis of Sales established a community of non-cloistered nuns in the year 1610. A few years later, he was obliged by ecclesiastical authority to include in the constitution of his community the rule of enclosure, which led him to say, "They have called me the founder of the Visitation! Is there anything more unreasonable? I have done that which I wished not to do; I have left undone that which I wished to." The plan of the great Saint to include in one community the active and contemplative life, the united offices of Martha and Mary, was realized in 1651 when the Order of St. Joseph was founded. That this community dates back to the year 1610 and has for its original founder the great Doctor of the Church is no unsubstantiated boast, as a subsequent incident clearly brought to light. During the French Revolution the houses of the two communities of St. Joseph and the Visitation were confiscated by the government. When peace was restored, the St. Joseph Sisters purchased "La Galerie" the cradle of the Visitation order at Annesey. The

latter appealed to Rome for authority to secure their mother house. The official answer to their request was that the Sisters of St. Joseph carried out in their constitution the first design of St. Francis of Sales when he founded the Order of the Visitation, and that it would seem an expression of the Divine Will that they should come into possession of the first establishment of the Great Saint.

So we see that the Congregation of St. Joseph is a very ancient institution. And during its long life it was an honored actor in some stirring scenes. It passed through two revolutions which threatened to compass its ruin. More than once it has stood beneath the shadow of the guillotine. Several of its members perished by the sword, and thus attained to the palm of martyrdom. Others, of whom the world was not worthy, were acquainted with prison cells or obliged to wander in mountains and in dens and in the caves of the earth. There were perils too by sea in the long journey to America, and hunger and cold when the snow drifted into the rude log cabin which served as the first motherhouse of the Institute in a new world.

As for illustrious associations, it is safe to say that none of our Communities have been linked up with so many prominent in Church and State, or with places so hallowed by heroic sanctity as that of St. Joseph. Its Motherhouse is under the shadow of Our Lady of Fourvières in the historic city of Lyons, the city of the propagation of the faith, and two of its earliest institutions were erected on the hills of St. Bruno and the Chartreuse, spots redolent of the virtues of many of the great saints of the middle ages. What a grand galaxy of historic personages stand out on the pages of the history of the Institute. Associated with its foundation were the great Doctor of the Church already mentioned, Father Medaille of the Society of Jesus, who realized the design of St. Francis, and St. Vincent de Paul, the friend and advisor of Bishop de Maupas in whose diocese the first house of the order was erected, and who was himself a God-child and namesake of King Henry of France. Among its benefactors were Anne of Austria "the wife, mother, daughter and sister of Kings," her son Louis XIV, and the Countess of Rochejacquelin who sold her precious jewels to defray the cost of establishing the community in America. And the bond that

united all these traditions of the old world with those of the new, and which seems to bring them so close to us was that a scion of one of the noble houses of France, the Count de Charbonnel, second Bishop of Toronto, welcomed the sisters to this Province in 1851, and that the first superior in Canada was Mother Delphine, a niece of the venerable Mother St. John who was the refoundress of the Institute after the Revolution and who bequeathed to the new community in Canada the beads with which she was fortifying herself for martyrdom in the prison cell, when the news came of the fall of Robespierre.

Ah, yes! There encircles the brow of every sister of St. Joseph the halo of romance, but, better and more treasured still, the aureole of charity and devotion to kith and kin.

CHAPTER X

MIRTH AND HUMOUR

"So ever let good Christian humour flourish,
And brown-eyed wit and cheer,—for God hath made
His Earth a cheery place where men may linger,
Telling old tales beneath an oak tree's shade."

Aubrey de Vere

ONE of my parishioners, a good old man, who goes to Mass and says his prayers, recently remarked to me, "It seems to me, Father, that the world is getting foolish." I do not know what led to his misgivings. It is not at all likely that he had heard of the new philosophies of life which have been evolved by prominent men outside the Church. His limited scope of observation had, however, convinced him that there was madness in the air; and who would say that he was not right? We are living in strange times. Every one feels this instinctively; but few give expression to their sentiments, fearing that it may be something subjective, something wrong with their livers, which causes them to look upon the world with jaundiced spectacles. But speak of the matter to any thinking man and you will find that he has experienced the same sentiments. The old men are growing

cynical and the young men are becoming more flippant. Mothers "do be thinking long" at home while their giddy daughters are gadding about. There is plenty of pleasure seeking but very little enjoyment. There is plenty of laughter but very little mirth. The unjust restrictions which pharisaical lawmakers have placed upon innocent amusements have caused, in large measure, the mad, hectic, whirl of unhealthy delights into which are drawn so many of the present generation.

This is certainly an age of prohibition. Some things are prohibited because one has not enough money to buy them. Other things are justly prohibited because their abuse constitutes a danger to the public weal. But many things, which are neither expensive nor dangerous, are vetoed on account of the zeal of some alderman to pass a by-law. It is very interesting to watch the intense, set expression on the face of one of these gentlemen, while he awaits his turn at the council board to exhibit his new instrument of coercion. Town councils seem to be obsessed by the idea that it is their duty to put as many restrictions as possible upon the citizens; whereas they are acting *ultra vires* when they restrict the liberty of any citizen in any

matter which does not seriously affect the well-being of the community. The boys and girls, and even elder people who had not lost the spirit of youth, used to sleigh-ride down a certain hill near the presbytery in Crofton. It was pleasant to hear their merry laughter ringing out upon the stillness of the evening air. It made one feel that the town was alive. Such dissipation and frivolity, however, was too much for some seriously minded alderman. Hence the hill is now deserted, the movies are better patronized, and another by-law is added to our municipal code.

The same spirit seems to have invaded our Catholic life. Some very correct people are shocked at the merriment indulged in by their Polish or Italian co-religionists on the occasion of a wedding or a baptism. "We can understand," they say, "the reason for the nuptial festivities: but why so much ado about a baptism?" Now these people are theologically wrong, and are guided not by the spirit of faith but by the spirit of the world. Even granted that matrimony is not what the small boy defined it, "A place of punishment, etc., etc.," the Polish Catholic is right in making a major feast of the christening; for a child of wrath has been

made a child of God, one of his own kith and kin has claimed the heirship to the kingdom of heaven, and received the greatest of all titles.

Many up-to-date Catholic couples now arrange for their wedding after the manner of an ordinary business transaction, get married quietly, and have their nuptial dejeuner in the dining car. When the baby arrives they wait for two weeks, and often a much longer time, before they bring it to the church to be christened. It would be cruel, you know, to expose the poor little thing to the air sooner. The christening is another business-like performance; in fact it does not occasion half as much stir in the household as the advent of the baby's first tooth. O, for the faith of the good old Irish mother who would not kiss her child till the regenerating waters had been poured upon its head! There may have been an over abundance of lager at the Polish christening, and perhaps the happy Irish father may have lifted his little finger once too often; but these were minor evils compared with the absence of Christian merriment from what ought to be the most joyous of festivities.

Mirth's twin sister humour seems also to have taken her departure. Subjectively speaking, our

daily press is absolutely devoid of humour; but objectively, it certainly touches the funny bone. The "Wit and Humour" column is a misnomer and the cartoons are often inane. The really humorous portions are the editorials and the letters to the editor. The men (or often women) who write to the editor are terribly, almost painfully, in earnest. This is what makes their ebullitions so extremely funny. It is the subjective unconsciousness of humour that gives charm to what is otherwise devoid of pungency. The editorials would be equally humorous were it not that we know that the editors have some sense of discernment and do not expect that everyone will take them seriously. There is a certain grim humour, however, in the fact that so many do accept the editor's dictum on all manner of subjects as an ex-cathedra pronouncement.

Humour has its source in a correct estimate of the proportion of things. The absence of it has bred a generation of men who do certainly get on one's nerves. They are so persistently and perpetually in earnest, each about his own pet scheme or his own pet theory, that they consider the interjection of a bon mot into the conversation as almost a profanation.

The really big men who have done things in the past never took themselves half so seriously. If the stars have a sense of humour— and some claim that inanimate things have—they must wink at each other and say, as they look down upon these little busybodies of our planet: "Ain't they funny?"

Mirth is closely allied to sanctity. I have in mind a certain religious—and there are many such in every community as there are among the laity in every parish—who is ever bubbling over with good humour, who radiates smiles and laughter wherever she goes. She is self-sacrificing and exemplary in the strict observance of the rule and in the performance of her duties. She is, in a word, a model nun, a true imitator of Christ. Hence the conundrum suggests itself: How can she, who is conspicuous for her smiles and mirth, be an imitator of Him Who never smiled and Who even said, "Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep"?

Apropos of this question two passages from comparatively recent works occur to me. The first is the closing paragraph in "Orthodoxy" by Chesterton. "I say it with all reverence," he says, "there was something which Christ hid from all men, when He went up on a mountain to pray. There was

something that He covered constantly by abrupt silence or by impetuous isolation. There was some one thing that was too great for God to show us, when He walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth."

The other is a sentence from one of McManus' tales of Irish folk-lore wherein he tells of the origin of the Fairies. According to this tradition when the great battle was fought in heaven some of the angels did not take sides—remained neutral, waiting to see which side would likely win. The sentence imposed upon them was that they could not enjoy the Beatific Vision, for they did not fight for God, but that they did not deserve to go to hell because they did not fight against Him. They were given their choice of any other abode and they chose to remain till the end of time on the heathery moors and in the wooded glens of Ireland, whose people are kind and compassionate towards the little exiles from heaven. "And they pay you back in kind," adds the author, "for they are gentle and genial with you. Only tricksome at times—for when they left heaven they did not leave love of fun behind."

There are many good reasons why we do not associate laughter and merriment with the person

of Our Lord. First of all it would be out of keeping with His Divine Personality. It is true that He shed tears for others' sins and sorrows, but this accords with His mission, which was to wipe away our tears, to bear our infirmities and to carry our sorrows. Manifestations of mirth had no place in the life of Him Who chose to be a "Man of Sorrow," to be a victim for our sins and to spend His whole life upon earth under the shadow of the cross. But as there is a sorrow too deep for tears, so there is a joy too great for laughter. Such was the joy that Our Lord experienced, even during the bitter hours of His passion. Only for a moment did He sacrifice even that, when on the cross His human nature, voluntarily deprived of the Divine support, forced from His lips the agonizing cry, "Eli, Eli, Lamma Sabacthani?" Chesterton, therefore, is right when he surmises that the great thing that Our Lord hid from men was His Mirth. Albeit that mirth far transcends our human concept.

As I have said, experience proves that mirth and sanctity go hand-in-hand. Where will you find persons who enjoy their recreations better than old religious, whose lives of self-sacrifice and obedience are drawing to a close? What body of men are so

jolly and possessed of such a keen sense of humour as the Catholic clergy? What nations have been more noted for their love of innocent fun and frolic than Catholic Quebec, Catholic Ireland and England in the days when she was "merrie England?"

A kind Providence has bestowed upon us mirth and laughter for a two-fold purpose, as a reward of virtue and as a necessary relaxation in our spiritual warfare. I saw an illustration of this quite recently. This week after a mission we had a social evening in the parish hall. The congregation were like a lot of little children—that is those of them who had made the mission. They were just bubbling over with merriment, ready to laugh on the provocation of an obsolete joke or on no provocation at all. Surely this is not the laughter that Our Lord condemned for it is the human expression of the spiritual peace that reigned in their hearts. No, what Our Lord said "woe to" is the worldly laughter of those who rejoice not in the Lord, or who would fain stifle by hilarity the voice of a reproving conscience.

But apart from the expression of joy there is another reason for this perhaps abnormal merriment. During the week these people had been face to face with the eternal truths, death, judgment,

heaven and hell; hence there was a tendency to relax the strain to which their minds and very souls had been subjected. This is in accordance with God's will, for while He desires that we should devote special consideration to these subjects at times and never forget them; yet, having regard to the weakness of our nature, He provides us with safety valves, by way of diversion and recreation, to avoid a condition of morbidity which would be dangerous. Those who give little thought to eternal things, or who dwell in a low spiritual plane, may never have known this sensation, which is a common experience with those who possess a lively faith. Nature demands recreation after labour, and there is no labour so hard as genuine prayer and meditation, because they are beyond the scope of our natural faculties.

We may conclude, therefore, that since joyousness is one of the outstanding characteristics of the blessed, that since even the little exiles from heaven (in Irish folk-lore) still retain their love of fun, those who are on their way to heaven should surely be merry. It is true that the saints in glory need not the feeble expression of joyous transports which benefits those who are still uncertain of their

salvation, and with whose smiles, tears and fears are so often mingled. The difference, however, is but one of degree. As grace is the germ of glory, so Christian mirth is the forerunner of eternal peace.

CHAPTER XI

TWO PICTURES

Gaze ye upon this picture and on that!
See here the grace of model and of form
That follows Nature's law:—in no way rude
But gentle and correct. Gaze ye on that
And see disorder and disruption rend
The definite purpose of the God of love,
And turn His work awry!

Rose Hawthorne Lathrop

EVERY person who purposes entering the marriage state looks forward to his or her wedding day with joyful anticipations. It is quite natural that this should be so, for it is one of the great epoch marking events in the lives of the great multitude of men and women. The nature of these anticipations varies in proportion as the persons concerned are spiritually or materially minded. There is this, however, in common to all, that the nuptial day is associated solely with orange blossoms and roses that have no thorns.

Much has been written anent the evil of mixed marriages, of the unhappiness in the home that almost invariably follows them, and of the danger of loss of faith to the Catholic party and the children born of the union. But the circumstances surrounding the marriage itself and the contrast that

it affords with the Catholic wedding, in which Holy Mother Church, in all the solicitude of her maternal heart, gives outward expression to the graces that she bestows upon her faithful children to give them assurance of future happiness and to gladden the day of their nuptials, should be enough in itself to deter anyone, endowed with Catholic faith, from forfeiting so great a blessing and so great a privilege.

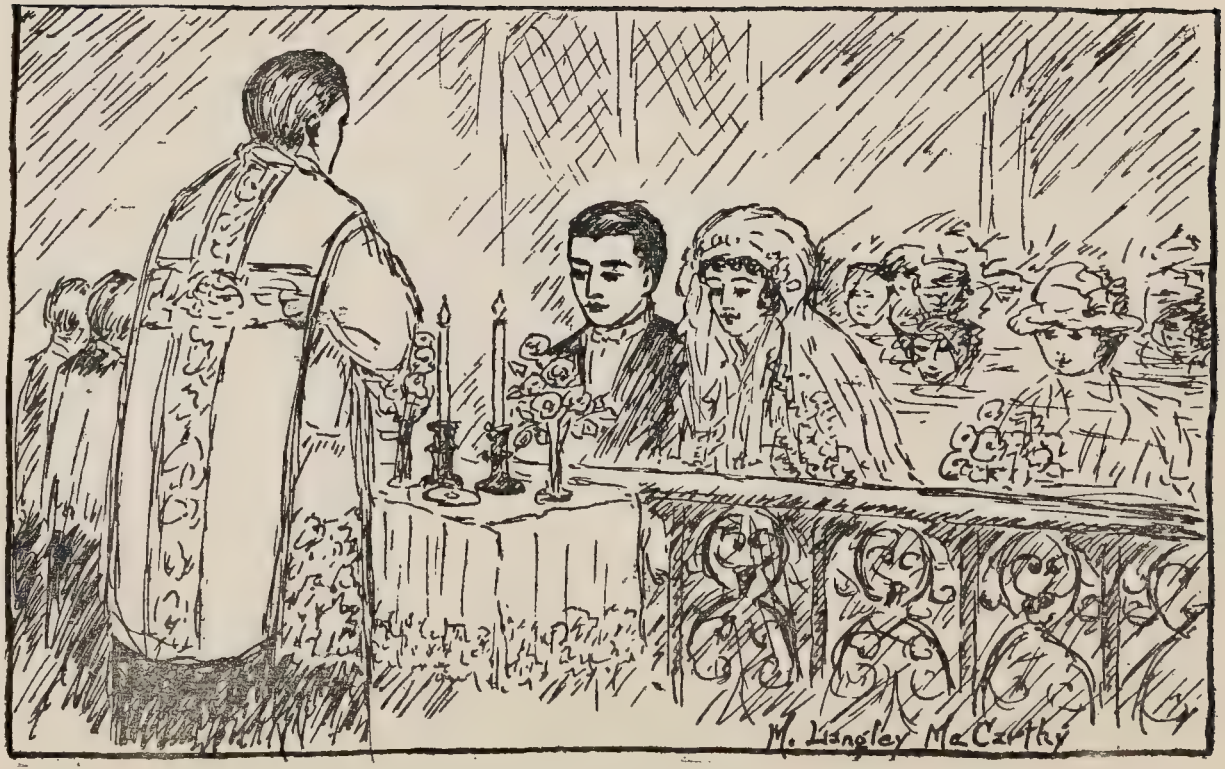
I had two weddings in Crofton recently—quite an unusual thing. The first was that of a young couple of the parish. They had both been baptized by my predecessor. They had attended school and catechism classes together and were confirmed on the same day. Their voices mingled in the children's choir and in the choruses at the social evenings in the parish hall. Later on the young lady took an active part in the work of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin, while the young man became an officer in the Holy Name Society. The latter occupied a good position in a local factory; and while he dressed well and spent a reasonable amount of his earnings on social pleasures in company with the young lady, whose name and his were being bracketed by the parish gossips, he managed to

lay by sufficient means to begin life for himself in an humble way. Finally I was officially notified of the intended culmination of a development whose various stages had been a source of keen interest and satisfaction to me.

The marriage day is set. The young couple have made the necessary preparations, not only as regards their spiritual affairs but also in the matter of those necessary or commendable provisions which their Catechism tells them should be made in preparation for marriage. They have consulted their parents and obtained their consent to the contract. They have notified their pastor so that the necessary banns may be duly proclaimed. They have invited their friends and relatives to the wedding, taking special care that those whose poverty or perhaps whose estrangement, for some cause or other, might engender sensitiveness, would be assured of a hearty welcome. Moreover, "The Mother of Jesus is there and Jesus also is invited to the marriage." The young couple are present at the re-enactment of that sacrifice of Calvary, wherein blood and water, typifying the Church, the Spouse of Christ, came forth from His sacred side while He slept the sleep of death upon the cross, as did the spouse of Adam

from the side of the first parent of us all. At that solemn moment of the Mass when the sacrificing priest prays in the name and person of Christ, using those sacred words which first issued from the divine lips of the Saviour "Pater Noster qui es in coelis," he turns from the altar, upon which the divine Victim is visibly present, to call down the benediction of heaven upon the contracting parties. To further supernaturalize their union they receive Christ into their hearts in Holy Communion. They can each say: "I live, not I, but Christ liveth in me and in us both." What a happy consummation of their boyhood and girlhood days! What a pleasant remembrance to treasure through the ups and downs of the years that are yet to come! As they turn their eyes and their affections to Mary's altar, before starting out on life's journey together, they are filled with confidence that she, at whose request her divine Son wrought His first miracle at the nuptials of Cana, will not permit, come what may, the wine of their happiness to be exhausted.

Now let us look at the other picture, not a ceremony before a minister or a justice of the peace, nor one of those unions which must be expedited "ad evitandum scandalum," but the marriage of a



The Nuptials

Catholic young man to an honest Protestant girl before a duly authorized priest. The contracting parties are strangers in Crofton. They have brought with them the necessary papers and I have received permission to officiate. The relatives of neither are present; nor would they have been present if the marriage had taken place in the home of the young couple; for they feel, each according to his or her own viewpoint, that the affair reflects discredit upon them. The "scrap of paper", on which are printed the promises, is signed by the bride-to-be. The young man kneels down in a distracted state of mind to make the necessary confession. Then, in the presence of two improvised witnesses and the priest who acts not in his sacerdotal capacity but as a legal minister, they pronounce the words which make them man and wife. What a cold and depressing ordeal it is for both! To the bride the few distinctively Catholic pictures that hang on the parlor wall have no meaning and offer no inspiration or comfort; while to the groom they are but reminders of what might have been and of what should have been. The young woman's prejudices prevent her from finding any consolation or encouragement in the words of counsel spoken

by the priest, and she misses the familiar hymns and the at least joyful if not sublime ceremonial with which marriage in her own church is invested.

As they leave the rectory there is no one to meet them, no one to greet them. They are strangers in a strange town, and strangers to each other's emotions. The bride assumes a cheerfulness which is evidently forced; and the groom lights a cigarette to relieve his feelings. They stand, as though dazed, at the four corners of the street, not knowing which way to turn. Poor misguided children! Well may they ask themselves the question: "Where do we go from here?"

CHAPTER XII

AULD ACQUAINTANCES

For old acquaintance sake let us renew
Old pleasures and regrets.
For old Time's lapse
Doth colour and transform common things,
Even as the dying sun, to fairyland
Turns the gray mountains and the rainy West!

Coventry Patmore

OF the various religious sects in this Province there is perhaps none that, in the past, has clung more tenaciously to doctrinal teaching, or has adhered to a larger fund of dogma than the Presbyterians. A modicum of religious belief satisfied the genius of Methodism. The Church of England, it is true, gives expression in her liturgy to a very considerable body of doctrine, which is altogether too Catholic to be an active principle in a church which rests upon national sentiment and which has repudiated legitimate authority with priestly power and jurisdiction. Unlike their English brethren, the Scottish Covenanters, in setting up the religion of the Kirk, found themselves in opposition to the nobility and unprotected by the aegis of the law. Misguided as was their zeal, yet they would seem to have possessed more

sincerity of religious belief than those who, from a worldly point of view, had everything to gain and nothing to lose by their apostasy. This sincerity, deepened by years of persecution, shows itself in the religious nature of many old Presbyterian families. Religion was taught in the schools of Scotland, and entered into the daily life of the people. The Word of God was revered by them. This is well illustrated by Ian MacLaren in his picture of the dying Covenanter. His English nurse wishes to read to him "The Rock of Ages." "No," said he, "none of your human compositions for me. Read me the 50th psalm of David."

In the early days of this Province, the descendants of these same Covenanters established homes for themselves in this new land. I was born and reared on the border of one of these Scotch settlements, and among the treasured recollections of my boyhood is the memory of the neighborly kindness and genuine hospitality of those thrifty people. Every Sunday morning in their democrats, which were then considered up-to-date means of conveyance, they attended church as regularly as the Catholics. On a recent visit to the old home I met one of the patriarchs of the district and I said

to him: "Andrew, how is it that so few of you Presbyterians go to church on Sunday morning now?" His reply was, "When you were a lad, we had a minister of the old school who preached the Word of God. Now the sermons are on popular subjects with a view to entertaining the congregation, and, if one works hard all week, he is not going to rise early Sunday morning to be entertained." Here is the situation in a nutshell. And who is responsible for it? In my judgment one would not be far astray if he laid the blame at the doors of the universities whose broad views have influenced the lives of the present generation of ministers.

It was a strange coincidence that upon my return to Crofton, I found a meeting was being held, of the Presbyterian ministers of the district, whose speeches and resolutions covered more than a page of the local paper. On my way to the postoffice I met one of the ministers, of whose career I knew something, but whom I had not seen since we studied together for matriculation in the old Grammar school. Jimmie McIntosh (let us call him) was then an earnest young man who took life seriously. He came of rugged Scotch stock and

had been brought up religiously on oatmeal porridge and the Shorter Catechism. I well recall how proficient he was in Greek and Mathematics, subjects which in our day appeal only to a small coterie. In a word, he was just such a youth as, had he been a Catholic, would have been looked upon by his bishop as a most promising candidate for the priesthood. In common with several other students in the school he was preparing himself to become a minister in the Presbyterian Church. These young men used to hold prayer meetings twice a week at one or other of their boarding houses. I doubt if this custom is still in vogue, it scarcely harmonizes with the spirit of modern student life. The remembrance of one of those meetings is one of the abiding recollections of my school days. I was present by accident and, being invited to remain, I did so, blissfully ignorant that I was thereby guilty of *participatio in divinis*. Two things impressed me on that occasion, the zeal of those young men to convert sinners and save them from hell, and the evident sincerity of their prayers.

My old friend Jimmie McIntosh is now Rev. James McIntosh, D.D., pastor of a fashionable

city church. I scarcely recognized him, there was something so cold and superficial about him. He gave the impression of acting a part and of being afraid lest someone would see through the disguise. In ordinary conversation he spoke in that well modulated rotund voice which ministers assume when they make a prayer. He did not particularly relish what to most men is especially interesting, viz., recollections of their school days. In vain I tried to draw him out; about the master and the old boys, but his only reply was, "There is so much of present interest, you know, that I scarcely ever give a thought to the old school." It was not, I suspect, that he was ashamed of the raw, young Scotch lad from the country, but rather that he feared to think of what Jimmie McIntosh, with his simple faith, his supernatural aspirations and his straightforward and logical principles, would think of this proper minister's picture, the Rev. James McIntosh, D.D.

Jimmie McIntosh started out with the intention of preaching the gospel as summarized in his little Scotch Catechism. The Rev. Dr. McIntosh preaches now on almost everything else but the gospel. His ear is to the ground to find out what will be

the next popular cry so as to lead in the shouting. Jimmie McIntosh believed in hell; in fact with his honest logic he would have said, "What's the use if there be no hell?" If the Rev. Dr. McIntosh believes in hell, he is very reticent about making a profession of his belief. Jimmie McIntosh never dreamed of such a thing as church union. Of course he had no D.D. but he had common sense. Perhaps he had heard of a blend of mountain dew; but the blending of religions would have touched the funny bone of even his Scotch sense of humor. The Rev. Dr. McIntosh is in favor of church union because it is popular with the multitude, because he deems it an evidence of broadmindedness, and lastly because he has not sufficient faith in any dogmatic formula to prevent him from making a compromise. The minister who attributed this unionist movement to a little clique of university professors and ministers in collusion with them, was right. It is the Universities that have been responsible for the devolution of just such men as Jimmie McIntosh, and for the elimination of the supernatural from the modern Kirk.

In addition to religious chaos, Modernism—for that is the disease that I have been describing—has

also caused political insanity As a body, our legislators of today do not measure up in dignity, ability or judgment with those who directed our political destinies at the time of Confederation and for many years after. The Scotch had a great deal to do with forming the constitution and laws of this country. What a brilliant galaxy of Scotch talent does not the history of Canada reveal! There were the Murrays and the Elgins (Thomas Bruce) the Smiths, the Simpsons, the Selkirks and the MacKenzies, the Campbells, the Camerons, the Allens, the Macdonalds, the Frasers and the MacPhersons. These were among the chief builders of our national structure. They were not all saints. They had their weaknesses and prejudices; but they were big men, men of vision who saw things in their right perspective. Above all they had the gift of humor, a sense of justice and a fair knowledge of Christian ethics. If these men of the old Kirk retained their power to reason logically and were not swayed by popular clamor and expediency, it was due in large measure to their knowledge of the very considerable body of genuinely Catholic doctrine and sound moral principles which they learned in their Catechism, or heard from the lips of the

old time ministers who clung to the rugged faith of the Covenanters. Yes, modernism has removed the safeguard of political sanity and is responsible for the large number of freak laws on our statute books. As Chesterton well put it, "With a long and sustained tug we have attempted to pull the mitre off pontifical man; and his head came off with it."

CHAPTER XIII

GOD'S ACRE

Nothing is our own: we hold our pleasures
Just a little while, ere they are fled:
One by one life robs us of our treasures;
Nothing is our own except our Dead.

Adelaide Proctor

"ANOTHER for the dumping ground!" is a frequent salutation from the baggage car, as trains pull in at our depot. Undertaking is one of the thriving lines of business in Crofton. I had eleven funerals last year and eight of them were from outside the parish. This is indeed a sad commentary on our economic conditions; for it was not choice but circumstances which forced the majority of these to migrate to distant parts. Yet it was consoling to know that ties of affection still bound them to their old parish and that like Jacob they had expressed the wish that their bones should lie with those of their fathers in the family plot.

Our cemetery, which is situated just outside the town limits, was laid out in generous proportions at a time when optimism and progress were characteristic of our provincial life. A third of it

would I judge be quite sufficient to supply our needs for generations to come. It is a pretty, restful spot, hedged around by a triple row of evergreens planted by one of my venerated predecessors. There used to be a number of cedar hedges, which were a nuisance, but, I am glad to say, they are gone. It happened thus. While waiting with my sexton for help to arrive for the spring burning, I thoughtlessly put a match to some dry grass. Presto! a gust of wind carried the fire beyond control. There was no time to burn a safety patch around the hedges and before help arrived they were all ablaze. There were lamentations, and, despite my protestations of innocence, I fear that some harbor even to this day a suspicion that the occurrence was not entirely accidental.

I visited the cemetery three times this year. On the first occasion the snow had just disappeared. I found the plots which had been well trimmed the year before, fresh and green, while the rest of the ground was covered with a mantle of hay stubble and long dead grass. My next visit was on the day after the burning. The fire had done its work well. It had entered into every nook and corner that the lawn-mower had not regularly passed over.

The prospect presented to the view was not unlike a huge checker board, decorated with green and black squares.

The fire had spared the verdant plots but had dealt mercilessly with the neglected ones. My last visit was during the first week in May. Lo there was a transformation! The sombre colors were nowhere in evidence. The brown and the black had disappeared, and the whole of "God's Acre" was covered with a fresh carpet of the green of hope which formed a fitting background for the white marble tomb-stones that pointed aloft as symbols of immortality.

There seemed to be a spiritual significance in the three scenes which I had witnessed. The green and the brown plots of early spring-time were types respectively of zealous and careless Catholics immediately after they had passed through the winter of death. The former had attended well to their souls in life, had by frequent confession nipped in the bud evil habits and so held themselves in restraint that their emotions and passions were allowed to develop only in that measure which would tend to the beauty of their lives. Just as the lawn-mower, passing at frequent intervals over the plot,

prevents the growth of noxious weeds and makes the green sward a thing of perpetual beauty, so does frequent confession check evil habits and keep our lawful desires and aspirations in conformity to the will of God. The plots that were mown but rarely during the season lacked the fresh velvety appearance of the ones which received regular attention. So it is with those who go seldom to confession. Their souls are not beautiful before they go, for there is upon them a large growth of the weeds and thistles of at least venial sins and the coarse grass of an unregulated life; and even when these have been removed the remains of them leave a disfigurement upon the soul.

Now the brown plots were those which were cut but once, and that at the end of the season. A lawn-mower could make no progress through the full-grown hay; so a scythe was used which left in its wake a long, coarse stubble. These plots symbolize those who go to confession only at the end of the Easter season. In their case absolution is no longer a lawn-mower that lops off the little excrescences which mar the beauty of the soul, but a sharp scythe which must cut its way through a

heavy growth of grievous faults, leaving necessarily behind it a goodly measure of the effects of these sins.

The next scene, the black and green squares, was suggestive of what takes place after death. The souls which had frequent and regular recourse to the means of grace had little to atone for in the next life. Their verdant freshness and freedom from everything that would disfigure their beauty made them secure against the fires of purgatory. Not so the others, the brown ones. There was there the dead grass of venial faults and the stubble of unatoned-for grievous sins, which had to be removed before the soul could be beautiful again. The cleansing fires must needs remove this. As St. Paul expresses it in his Epistle to the Corinthians, man's works shall be tried, and if his works burn, if there be wood and stubble in them, he shall suffer loss, though he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

The May-day scene foreshadowed the ultimate lot of all those who died reconciled to God. They shall all be beautiful in the day of eternity, though their beauty will vary as did the ways by which they attained to everlasting peace.

It has been the custom of the congregation to visit the cemetery in a body twice if possible during the year, in the month of May, and again, if the weather permits, in the month of November. The Rosary is said in common followed by the "De Profundis." Then the majority say a little private prayer and perhaps place some flowers each on the grave of his or her dear ones.

I have always found that a stroll through the cemetery has a very chastening and salutary influence upon the mind. Some one has spoken of "sermons in stones". This is certainly true of tombstones. The eptitaphs remind us of those chapters in Genesis in which the deaths of the patriarchs are recorded: "And all his days were in the whole nine hundred and fifty years: and he died". There is something dignified and orthodox about an inscription such as this: "Sacred to the memory of Patrick O'Brien, native of County Cork, Ireland, who departed this life Nov. 6th, 1887, aged 92 years. May his soul rest in peace". There is a certain grim humour about the monumental poetry that was so much in vogue some years ago. I might quote some very choice morsels, were I not restrained by the admonition "*De mortuis nil nisi*

bonum." Like many obituary effusions, these seem to have been ready-made. There are women who can turn out these verses with the dexterity of a limerick composer. The marble cutter has always a supply on hand. You look them over and take your choice. Here is where the humour comes on. The tenderness of affection expressed is generally in inverse ratio to the love manifested in life. The soulful elegy, in gilded letters, may have seemed a thing of beauty at first; but it was not a joy forever. Like the floral offerings it soon faded. Such is the lot of all things which rest upon mere mundane sentiment, and have not their foundation in sincerity and faith.

In one of those strolls I came upon a plot, overgrown with weeds and briars. On the little mound of earth that marked the grave was an unmolested ant-hill. After some scraping of black moss from the tombstone I deciphered these words: "Gone but not forgotten." Now the first part of that epitaph was true. He was gone; no doubt about that—mortuus est. But the second part was a lie. He was forgotten. His body was forgotten and, no doubt, his soul likewise. Saddest of all, he was perhaps to blame for it himself. It is quite

probable that he did not make a will; if he did, it was a poor one. Methinks this neglected plot reveals a grim tragedy—incessant toiling and saving in the old home—most of the children dispersed—a son and daughter leading a dreary life with the old folks—death—no will—equal division of property according to law—ingratitude of those who received what was not voluntary—bitter feelings in the hearts of others who felt themselves wronged—wranglings—perhaps lawsuits, but no Mass to smooth the way to eternal peace, no care for the grave of the father because, without intending to be so, he had been unjust to his God, to himself and to his children.

I have been much edified by the interest which the present and former parishioners of Crofton take in their burial plots. This is as it should be. I admit that it does not matter how neglected a man's earthly remains may be if his soul is in heaven. But a sense of decency would suggest that, if it be in his power, he should provide for the care of his grave. Fifteen hundred years ago St. Augustine speaking of Christian burial, admonished the faithful that if they treasured the clothing and the little keepsakes which belonged to their departed friends, they

should not neglect those bodies, whose members were the instruments with which they performed their good works, and which being a part of their very nature were more intimately associated with their souls than the outward garment that clothed them. Moreover, he added that if the Pagans, who do not believe in the resurrection of the body, lavish such care upon their sepulchres, surely Christians, who do believe that the dead shall rise again, should show honour to their remains. If a man be in the state of grace it does not matter so very much whether he is clothed in rags or in broadcloth; yet he owes it to himself and to the community to dress as neatly as his means will permit. The coverlet and blankets of the bed on which he takes his daily rest should be clean and properly arranged. Surely the same applies to "the narrow daisy quilt" under which he sleeps his last long sleep.

CHAPTER XIV

CHRISTMAS AT CROFTON

O Lowly manger, cradling boundless Love,
What lips can speak, what artist heart can paint,
Thy wondrous story?

Rev. D. A. Casey, Litt. D.

IT is Christmas eve and we are to have Midnight Mass. As I knew that I would be busy with confessions till a late hour, I went down town early in the evening to see the crowd and the stores and to make a few purchases. I met a number for the townfolk who wished me the compliments of the season; I had a hearty handshake from my grocer, and found a rather bulky mail composed for the most part of bills, advertisements and printed greeting cards. The experience of my stroll elicited the following reflections.

The businessman of the world views Christmas from the standpoint of sales. His store windows are tastefully decorated, special bargains are advertised as an accompaniment to the season's greetings, and additional help is engaged to attend to the wants of customers. When Christmas Day arrives he is more concerned with counting over his gains than with any religious or even social

festivities incident to the occasion. He wishes his friends the compliments of the season, but his mind is chiefly concerned with the credit side of the ledger. If business has been brisk he exhales the spirit of cheerfulness in his family circle, and even in the exuberance of his good humor sends some gifts to the poor. But to the spiritual significance of the feast, he pays not the slightest heed.

Next comes the sentimentalist—I think he is the author of some of the Christmas cards. For him the joyful feast does not commemorate "that great central event in the world's history, to which all creation moves." It is rather something that has been created by man's imagination as a means of giving expression to his sentiments of brotherly love, sociability and admiration for those virtues which cluster round that very ancient institution, the home. Most of the Christmas editorials which appear in our local papers throughout the country never point to anything beyond this very human ideal. They ignore altogether the supernatural aspect of the feast or refer to it in very veiled and indefinite terms. The truth of the matter is that the average non-Catholic writer has such uncertain knowledge of the Incarnation that he very

prudently judges it better not to give his unproportioned thoughts their word, and contents himself with reeling off a lot of sentimentality for which there is absolutely no sanction if the central truth which the festival commemorates be not accepted and acted upon.

And what of the custom which is becoming so common nowadays of sending printed greeting cards? Its appropriateness is evident in the case of persons holding an official position, who are bound, as a matter of friendship or courtesy, to extend their best wishes to a larger number of people with whom they are on varied terms of intimacy. But between private individuals I do not think that the practice is commendable. It is too cold and formal. It is too suggestive of an easy way out of an obligation. Of course, the printing costs money, as does a telegram of congratulations. But both are subterfuges, excuses often for either sloth or indifference, and altogether out of keeping with the spirit of a season when a Gift was given to us at the price of sacrifice. The printed form lacks the personal touch that accompanies a few lines in a friend's own handwriting. Besides it adds to the burden of the already overworked postal servants;

for the mailing list is apt to be much longer when there is no writing to be done. Few there are, who are so busy as not to have time to write at least one sentence to a friend at that holy season, to express to him their affection and good wishes. But alas, that fine old art of letter writing is becoming obsolete! The printer and the lithographer do all the work for us; and we are the poorer for it in mind and heart.

Quite in line with the printed card is the salutation, "I wish you the compliments of the season." I know that good usage has put its sanction upon this expression; but the dictionary indicates the manner in which it should be employed, by stating that it is "a ceremonious or formal greeting." We are apt to associate it with the merchant's calendar. It has often occurred to me that it would be very appropriate in the above instance if the word "compliments" were spelled "complements" and the clause added "and we can provide you with them at the lowest price." The expression has become so suggestive of a desire for trade or for a vote at the January elections that it has ceased to be expressive of any great warmth or sincerity. Personally, I must confess that a chilly

The Crib at Crofton

sensation comes over me when a friend takes my hand on Christmas day and says, "I wish you the compliments of the season." His sentiments in my regard may be most kindly and Christian, but his words do not seem to convey them.

Recently Gilbert Chesterton discussed the question, whether we should say "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Christmas," and arrived at the right conclusion that the former is the correct form of salutation. Happiness is the normal condition of a good man who is at peace with God: and is not incompatible with the bearing of the cross. Christians are presumed to be at peace with God. That is why to wish a man a "Happy Christmas" is an intimation—although it may not be accepted as such— that we have reason to believe that he is sadly in need of absolution. A "Merry Christmas" on the contrary suggests a special season of exhilarated or abnormal happiness, a time of Christian gladness. As it is the children's feast it is a time of mirth, and we should say "Merry Christmas," to all, old and young; for we are admonished that we must become as little children.

When the town clock tolled the hour of midnight, the dear old Church, the oldest in the diocese, saw

a congregation assembled which was reminiscent of the days when the commercial life of Crofton was at its zenith. The boys and girls were home from college and convent, from workshop and department stores Some old sinners too, who still cling to the skirts of the Church, were putting in their annual appearance. Not a few non-Catholics were present, some through curiosity and others who make it a yearly custom to attend midnight Mass.

I wonder what is the loadstone which draws non-Catholics to our churches at Christmas. I think is is that the natural craving of their hearts to be close to their God is thereby satisfied. They instinctively feel this proximity to their Saviour in a Catholic church at this holy season when Bethlehem, the house of bread is so closely associated with the altar.

One of themselves, and a Canadian too, has thus expressed this thought most beautifully:

"I lift the Lord on high,
Under the murmuring hemlock boughs, and see
The small birds of the forest lingering by
And making melody.
These are mine acolytes and these my choir
And this mine altar in the cool, green shade,
When the wild, soft-eyed does draw nigh,
Wondering, as in the byre
Of Bethlehem the oxen heard Thy cry
And saw Thee, unafraid."

Many outside the fold, it is true, are shocked at our familiarity with God which is a commonplace amongst us. That we should locate Him in our tabernacles, look upon Him, touch Him with our hands, and even receive Him upon our tongues seems to them not only irreverent but incredible. Yet it is precisely because God is so near to us in the Catholic Church that the truth of her mission is confirmed, that the seal of the Divinity is stamped upon her. All her marks are, in a measure, contained in this one, that she brings God into the midst of His people. If she is one, it is because God, Who is one, dwells in her and in her faithful members who are His temples. If she is holy, it is chiefly because the souls of her children are nourished with the flesh and blood of Him Who is the source of all holiness, and Who, in a visible manner, is received into the heart of each communicant. If she is Catholic, it is because she is not a mere aggregation of individuals, but a living organism, animated by the Spirit of God, bound to expand and develop, ever ancient and ever young with divine vitality. If she is apostolic, it is because she walked with God in Galilee, yea, even put her hand into the place of the nails and into His sacred side.

The outstanding feature of that great mystery of the Incarnation is that it brought God so close to us, in the very midst of His people, that He became our Emmanuel. In this not only were our longings satisfied, but also the yearnings of the heart of God; for He has told us that His delights are to dwell with the children of men. In the Garden, Adam walked and conversed with God, and that happy familiarity would have continued had not sin intervened. One of the greatest penalties of sin inflicted upon the people of the Old Law was that it deprived them of the presence of God; for in the day of His wrath he retired into His inaccessible heaven and left the world gloomy and desolate. If the Jews built for themselves idols of gold and copper and clay, it was because they desired to have the object of their worship in their midst.

The Incarnation satisfied that longing in a manner far transcending the most sanguine of human hopes. God not only came back to earth, but was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. He became a child among children, a man among men. Bethlehem is reproduced wherever there is a Catholic Church. The Incarnation is perpetuated by the priest at the

altar, and thus God's abiding presence with us is assured for all time. Those terms of endearment which we have heard from the lips of some good, pious woman: "O my darling Jesus " "O my sweet Saviour " are indications of a lively vivid faith in this personal presence. It is because of belief in the Eucharist that that other presence by which God is everywhere by reason of His essence, exercising His providence over each of us, is more easily realized. If we believe that He is personally present in every Catholic Church throughout the world, it is easier to believe that he is "not far from each one of us, about our path and about our bed and spieth out all our ways." Destroy belief in the Eucharist, and you destroy belief in God's Providence.

The world outside the Church today gives us a sad illustration of this. It has banished His Eucharistic presence, and is thus left without God, more forsaken and desolate than were the Jews of old; for there is not even the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night to guide or shelter its children. Being thus abandoned, it has, like the Israelites, made for itself gods, erected idols of wealth, of power of pleasure and of culture. In recent years these have been smashed to powder and a disillusioned

and grief-stricken world feels more than ever the need of God's personal presence. A god who is a mere abstraction, a pantheistic personification of nature, a vague nebulous deity to be politely referred to in official State pronouncements, offers little consolation to the broken-hearted. What their hearts yearn for is the living presence of the Divine Comforter. They know that He has said, "Come to Me all you who labor and are heavily burdened and I will refresh you." But how can they go to Him? Like Magdalen at the door of the empty sepulchre, they cry out in their anguish, "They have stolen away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." Hence, thank God, the world is turning to that Church which has perpetuated God's presence in our midst. On bended knees, beneath the lamp of the tabernacle, many of its sorrowful children are realizing that peace promised to people of good will on the night of Christ's Nativity.

I have always felt that the crib is an indispensable adjunct to the Christmas festivities, even though it may seem incongruous to kneel before the representation when the Reality is present. Each of us realizes how deep and lasting an impression was

made upon his mind by the crib before which, as a little child, he knelt in his parish church. He may since have seen more elaborate ones, he may understand now more of the mystery of the Incarnation as a theological truth; but it was as he listened for the first time to the story of the coming of the Christ-Child, and as he knelt in wondering awe before the rustic manger, that the mysteries which surround it, mysteries of poverty, humility, self-sacrifice and love were engraved on the virgin tablets of his memory, never to be effaced, but to shine out even through the obscuring impressions of subsequent sin and worldliness.

Teaching truth by signs and ceremonies is only a little less important than teaching it by the written or the spoken word. Both should go hand in hand to produce true religious education in the child. Apropos of this, one of the most touching sermons it has been my pleasure to listen to was the telling, in the admirable verses written by Grace Keon, of the coming of the Christ-Child, by a number of little boys and girls ranged in a semicircle before the crib. In some Catholic countries of the old world the Catechism is neglected, often with serious danger to the faith, especially of emigrants;

but it has sometimes occurred to me that we do not appeal as much as we should to the senses and to the emotions. We consider the child well fortified for the battle of life when it knows its "Butler" from cover to cover, forgetful it has other faculties besides the intelligence which also aid in preserving the sacred deposit of faith. The Church has decreed that everything about the altar should speak to us of Calvary, so that in imagination we might kneel at the foot of the cross. It is the same motive which prompts the placing of the crib in our churches on Christmas night.

But there are cribs and cribs, varying in size and magnificence from the little rustic manger with the single figure of the Child cradled on a pallet of straw, to the elaborate panorama of pastoral scenes and Oriental splendor. The latter often fail in their purpose and become for the children, old and young, more a subject of distraction than an object of devotion. The black man from Nubia, the cute little donkey that leads the camel, and the funny-looking sheep engross more of their attention, I fear, than the Mother and Child. Then again the lesson of poverty and self-sacrifice is not taught; for the impression is left that our Lord, Who is

often represented by an effeminate-looking and expressionless doll, was born in a gorgeous palace in the midst of wealth and luxury. If less attention were given to the setting, or at least better taste displayed in it, and more art employed in perfecting the figures of the central group, the object would be more surely attained. The ideal crib is the one which conveys to the senses that combination of simplicity and poverty, heavenly love and beauty that is so well expressed in the word-picture of St. Luke.

On Christmas afternoon I spent an interesting, and I trust, fruitful couple of hours acting as cicerone for a goodly number of non-Catholic children and adults who had accepted an invitation, inserted in the local paper, to visit the Crib of the Nativity in the Catholic Church. Our Crib is a rustic one, nestling in a minature grove of evergreens. In the background is a painted screen representing the star shining over the little village of Bethlehem. A concealed red light casts a ruddy glow over the figures, which include the Holy Family, the dumb beasts, the shepherds and the Magi. Two angels in flowing robes, holding a scroll on which are inscribed the words "Gloria in Excelsis Deo," are suspended from the ceiling by

an invisible wire. Cherubs are seated upon the roof, and one little chap, who lost an arm in his descent from his heavenly abode in the organ loft, is bashfully concealing his infirmity behind some protecting foliage. Some are playing upon harps and other musical instruments, while one with uplifted finger is directing the singing of that glad anthem which was heard on the first holy night by the humble shepherds in the field of Booz.

The first interesting trait which I remarked in my guests was the timidity they showed in entering the church. Some would have retired, after partially opening the door, if there were no one there to assure them that they were welcome. One lady, who found much to interest her, confessed that this was the first time that she had been in the church, though she had been passing the door for fifty years. We Catholics are, perhaps, too much inclined to attribute to bigotry the unwillingness of non-Catholics to enter our places of worship. While this may be the motive in some cases, in many instances their hesitancy is due to a sense of awe and reverence for an edifice which they instinctively feel is holier and more sacred than their own conventicles. The consciousness, too, that they are

unfamiliar with the Catholic manner of conducting one's self in church, adds to their embarrassment and deters them from gratifying, if not their devotion, at least their curiosity.

There is no more propitious time in which to invite a non-Catholic to visit the Church than during the Christmas season. The altar appeals to them only vaguely. They do not understand its meaning, for in their own churches there is no worship of sacrifice. The mystery of the Real Presence transcends their rudimentary religious concepts; but the Crib speaks a language which they understand. These good people had been afraid to come in, and, having entered they did not feel at home. A mingled expression of embarrassment and fear of an undescribable something showed itself in their countenances. The ancestral heroes and heroines of the great Catholic family, represented in picture and statue, were strangers to them, but as they gathered around the Crib an understanding look came into their eyes, and joy and gladness lit up their faces. They were thankful, very thankful, and the expressions of gratitude, even from those who were wont to don an orange sash on the Twelfth of July, were far from conventional.

After all, the Crib is the centre and source of genuine Christian brotherhood and the inspiration of that fellow feeling that makes us wondrous kind.

The children were especially pleased. One could read it in their looks. Many who had never spoken to a priest before became quite friendly and not at all adverse to taking him into their confidence. It was the first time thay had seen the Crib, but most of them were familiar with the Gospel narrative and could identify the various figures. Strange to say, however, Saint Joseph seemed to be a stranger to many of them. I asked one little boy, "Who is the Infant in the manger?" "God," was the reply. "And who is the Lady seated beside Him?" "The Virgin Mary," he answered. Happy for the lad he had not heard that the virginal birth of Christ was questioned by high authorities in his own church, and that the great Omniscient God, the Eternal Son of the Father, was "prejudiced in his judgments by his distinctively Jewish cast of mind." Children, especially if they have been baptized, instinctively grasp the mystery of the Crib. They believe in the Divinity of Christ. They see God for they are pure of heart. If the mystery of the Incarnation be accepted, the mystery

of the Altar offers no difficulty. Once believe that the Creator of heaven and earth became a little helpless child for our sakes, and it is easy to realize how He could have carried that love one step further and be present under the form of the Host in order to dwell with His people. Men do not believe in the Eucharist because they have ceased to believe in the Incarnation. If those thousands of young innocent souls, hungry for the bread of truth, could be brought to the Crib, the Little Child would lead them to the Altar.

CHAPTER XV

SEMINARY DAYS

Today He sends you forth, His warriors bold
All fitly armoured, to the fields of war;
Or, like good shepherds, to defend the fold
And drive the inveterate Enemy afar.
Mission sublime, in your souls' chambers never
Shall cease that voice "Thou art a priest forever!"

Rev. J. B. Dollard, Litt. D.

TO the casual visitor who is viewing the City of Montreal from the top of a motor-bus, the massive stone building on Sherbrooke Street may elicit only a passing interest, such as is evinced by the man who enquires from his seat-companion, "What institution is that?" when from the car window he catches a glimpse of the majestic pile on Scarboro Heights, where the future clergy of this Province are being trained for their life work But to one conversant with the history of the Church in Canada, and above all to its alumni, there is perhaps no institution with which is associated the memory of so many noble deeds, so many enduring fruits of sacrifice, and so many holy lives as the Grand Seminary of Montreal. I feel that I would be lacking in gratitude if I concluded these essays without a reference to my Alma Mater. As a

background for my personal recollections let me first give a bird's-eye view of the past.

What of those round towers? Have they a history? Oh yes! A history which dates back to the early days of the colony; for in those towers the companions of Marguerite Bourgeoys instructed the little Indian children in the faith. What a scene that name conjures up! It speaks to us of Ville Marie, the ancient name of the City of Montreal, the name that was given to it by Father Olier, the founder of the Suplician Community and the leading spirit in the formation of the Company of Notre Dame. It was he and another man of God, M. de la Dauversière, who conceived the plan of purchasing from the Company of One Hundred Associates the Island of Montreal, for the purpose of making it a missionary centre for the propagation of the faith in New France. With such confidence in our Blessed Lady did they inspire their associates in this heavenly appointed task that no difficulties could deter them from pursuing their enterprise. "I will go," said Maisonneuve to his friends in Quebec, "even though every tree be an Iroquois." In a May morning in 1642 that valient soldier and Christian gentleman landed at the foot of Mount

Royal. And oh, what did not that infant colony suffer from savage torch and massacre, for nearly half a century from that day! Yet under Mary's protection God's work went on. Within a few years that great institution of charity, the Hotel Dieu, was founded by Mlle. Manse, that pioneer teaching community, the Sisters of the Congregation, was established by the Venerable Marguerite Bourgeoys, and the first parish church, that of Notre Dame, erected and placed in charge of the Sulpicians. Such were the auspices under which the future directors of the Grand Seminary began their work in this country.

After the cession in 1763, a determined and organized effort was made by the English authorities —in which matter Dr. Mountain, the Anglican Bishop of Quebec, was a leading spirit—to arrogate to themselves the sole right of educating the youth of the country. The existing religious communities were not permitted to add to their numbers; so that in 1793 we find them almost extinct. At this juncture the British Government offered asylum to the clergy banished from France by the Revolution. It may be stated here, in passing, that this was an act for which the Catholics of the Empire owe a

debt of gratitude to England. If the Oxford Movement, ushered in by Cardinal Newman, made such rapid progress, it was because many of the young Englishmen of that day, whose private tutors were exiled French priests, men of sanctity and culture, had received from their childhood favorable impressions of Catholicity. In Canada the restriction mentioned was removed and the arrival in Montreal of a dozen Sulpicians gave a new impetus to the cause of education in the colony. The well-known colleges of Ste. Therese, Assumption and St. Hyacinthe, date from this time. The College of Montreal was first established at Longue Pointe, 1767. In the year 1773 it was transferred to the Place Jacques Cartier in the city itself. Rebuilt in 1806, it stands to this day beside the Church of Notre Dame. It was in this college that the Grand Seminary was established in the year 1840, during the episcopate of Msgr. Bourget. In 1857 it was transferred to its present position on the mountain

After this brief prologue, I will draw aside the curtain and grant to my readers the privilege of viewing something of what passes within this *hortus conclusus*. For my feminine readers this

is an unique privilege; for be it known that ladies were never permitted to pass its inner portals. There is a tradition that, once upon a time, a woman was actually seen in one of the corridors; but there is ground for suspicion that this rumor was started by some wag who wished to shock the Faculty.

On a September day in the year 1891, the young aspirants to the priesthood have foregathered from various parts of the continent but chiefly from what was once the ancient Diocese of Quebec, but now represented by over eighty episcopal sees, which form a gigantic cross upon the face of the continent, a cross which extends from Acadia in the East to the Rocky Mountains in the West, and from the Hudson Bay in the north to the Rio Grande in the south. The Maritime Provinces send their quota of sturdy Scotch and Irish youth, imbued with lively faith and apostolic zeal, worthy successors of the Fisherman of Galilee. Then come the representatives of the wild and woolly West, rough diamonds some of them, but genuine sterling characters, endowed by nature with brawn and sinew, and that optimistic spirit that their native atmosphere seems to inspire, and of which they will have ample need in their future labors. Impatient of restraint their im-

petuous natures often bounded over the cold decree of the Sulpician rule. As a consequence of this some among them had their call for orders deferred. It may be explained here that the case of each young man comes up before a number of priests, who constitute the council, and who decide, in the name of his bishop, whether his standing in class, his observance of the rule, and his deportment generally, justify their giving him a call to minor or major orders, as the case may be. If he receives the little white ticket with the magic words "ad Minores" or "ad Subdiaconatum," printed upon it, he consults with his director as to whether or not he should accept it. The story is told of a student from the Western States, who, owing to a persistent disregard for the rule, had twice received a blank card. At last the welcome summons arrived and he immediately set out to interview his director. "Entrez," said the venerable old priest, under whose apparently austere manner lurked a playful humor. The young man being seated, the following conversation took place:

"Well, my child, what can I do for you?"

"Father, I have received my call to minor orders?"

"Bon! What were you thinking of doing with it?"

"I was thinking of taking it."

"My dear young man, do you know what St. Aloysius did when he got his call for minor orders?"

"I don't know, Father."

"Through humility, he refused it."

"Ah, but Father! he was sure of getting it the next time."

See that group of prim, natty, clean-cut youths, watching a battery warming up. Some of them have won laurels at Holy Cross, and have played in the major league. They are the New Englanders, a little childish in their devotion to Old Glory, a little inclined to undervalue institutions which are not American and peoples whose customs differ from their own, but withal, worthy sons of Irish parents, who, rejoicing in their new-found liberty, gladly and gratefully offered their first born to recruit a priesthood that is now second to none.

I need not speak of Ontario's sons—you know them. But all these are strangers; and in the eyes of many of them may be discerned that far-away look that speaks of homesickness.

There remains another and very numerous class. You may see them promenading in little groups, either in the halls or on the board walk, chatting

and gesticulating as gaily as a bevy of convent girls. They feel quite at home, for they are to the manner born, and, in more senses than one, in their father's house. The life and language of the seminary are not new to these French-Canadian youths. The tongue of Bossuet is their vernacular, more truly than it is that of the citizens of Paris; and they have been acquiring since their earliest year in the petit seminaire or in the diocesan colleges a knowledge of the language of Horace and Cicero, that makes it almost as familiar to them as their mother tongue. Many of them come from the little white-washed cottage homes of the habitant that dot the countryside, while not a few are descendants of the old seignorial families, that constitute the only genuine aristocracy of which Canada can boast. The majority of them speak English well, and those who are less proficient in that language show an admirable zeal in acquiring it. They are good mixers and keenly alive to the opportunity of obtaining information from their English-speaking companions, many of whom, unfortunately, are not so wise in their generation. While they maintain the most cordial attitude towards others, altogether free from any spirit of self-superiority

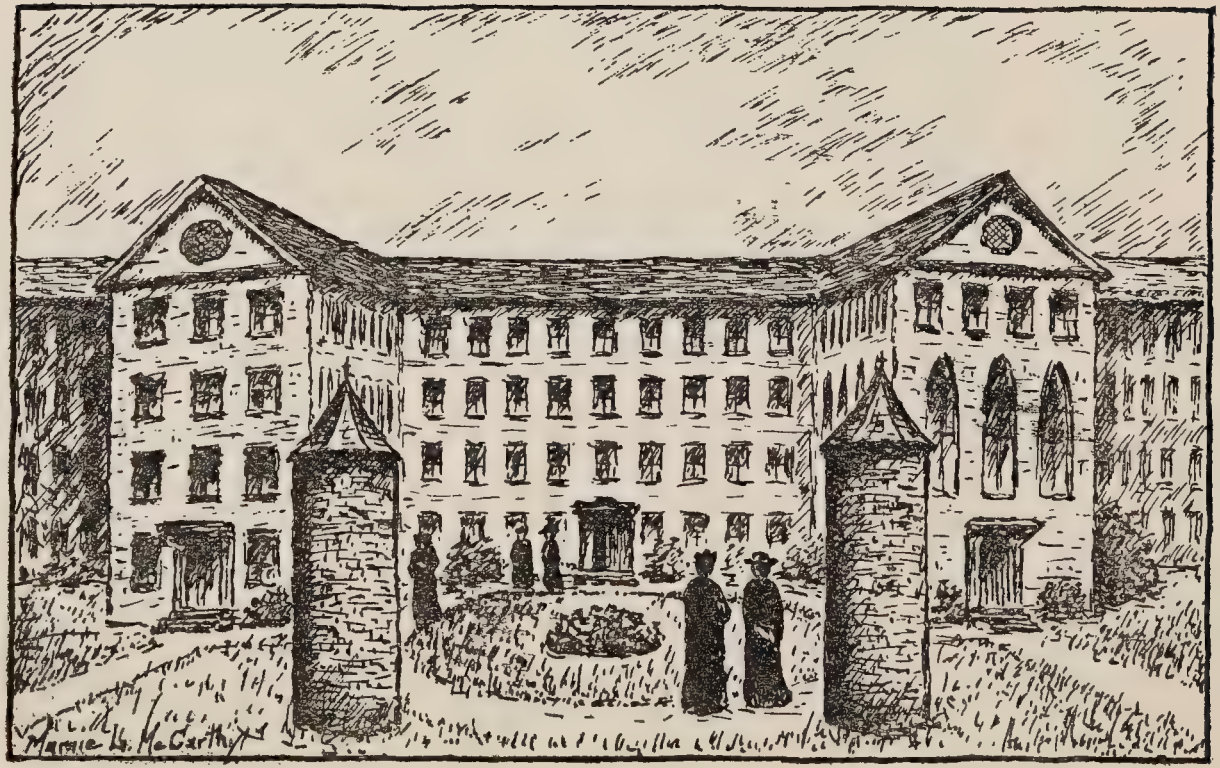
or aloofness, such as might be expected of those who are on their own camping ground, yet they hold their own in a dignified manner, and with that polite aggressiveness which is characteristic of their race, and quite becoming in those who can look back on over three hundred years of noble achievements for the material and spiritual advancement of Canada on the part of their forebears.

Mention of the Faculty, or the gentlemen as they were familiarly known, recalls some outstanding characters who have left the imprint of their personality upon the minds of thousands of our clergy. Apart from those still on the staff of the seminary, there were, in the early nineties, at least four men whose names are familiar to every student of the Grand.

The Abbé Colin, then old and feeble, but rarely addressed the boys. As he hobbled into the lecture room, and began his remarks in a faltering voice, there was little indication of the power and fire that was in him. Gradually, however, he warmed to his subject, and, when the bell sounded for the close, everyone was hanging upon his words, as the frail, bent, trembling figure, now erect and all aglow, revealed something of that fervid and classic

eloquence which in the days of his prime had so often held, as in thrall, the vast congregations of Notre Dame.

The then Superior of the Seminary was the Abbé Lecoq, affectionately known to the boys as "Charley." Little thought the jeweled ladies of fashion and the haughty princes of commerce, as they rolled past in their grand carriages, that the little priest with the flat Roman hat, rather faded coat, and inevitable rubbers, was the most learned man in Canada. Yet such was the case. Not only this, but he possessed the rare power of being able to apply that knowledge to the question in hand, and the still rarer faculty of communicating it to his pupils in an interesting, lucid, and convincing manner. Few, even among our English-speaking priests, were more familiar with the great masters of our language than he. Frequently in the course of the spiritual lectures, of which the students never grew tired, he would quote from one or other of his two favourites, saying, "comme dit le Cardinal Newman," or "comme dit Shakespeare." Then would follow a sentence, and sometimes a whole paragraph or stanza, which had direct bearing upon the matter under discussion.



A Seminary Scene

My director of those days was Father Rouxel, who rejoiced in the sobriquet of "Lord John." The similarity of his name to that of a great English statesman suggested the title which well became him, for he was the very personification of that clerical dignity and of that suavity and politeness, which was characteristic of the most cultured circles in the French Capital. To those who knew him, and his confrère, Father Delavigne, the superior of Philosophy, whose kind, fatherly solicitude, especially for the English-speaking boys, has endeared his memory to many, the very mention of their names will call forth more eloquent, if unspoken, tributes than it were possible for me to express. These holy men, pastmasters in the knowledge of human nature, endowed by God with the special grace to direct souls destined for the priesthood, came to the assistance of the young levites at that, for them, momentous epoch in their lives when they stood trembling upon the brink of the Sanctuary, and gave them courage and assurance by the voice of authority and consolation. Little wonder that the very furniture of their rooms left its indelible imprint on memory's walls!

When one is in a reminiscent mood, there is a temptation to dwell upon old scenes and incidents; but I am restrained by the consideration that many of these would be of interest only to the initiated. I might tell how artistically the students make their beds, how dexterous they are with the broom, and how handy with the needle; but I prefer to leave that to the fertile imaginations of my readers. Neither may I linger on the glowing eloquence of the young pulpit orator's first discourse, delivered to the accompaniment of the rattle of dishes and "Please pass the potatoes." How many in later years, when congratulated by foolish persons, must have reverted to the scathing criticism to which their first sermon was subjected, and in which they were apparently saved from annihilation only by this closing remark of the superior: "Neanmoins il y avait quelque chose de bon dans cette instruction, et le jeune homme ne doit pas être découragé."

One incident, however, I cannot forego mentioning. The Irish corridor where the new students of Philosophy most did congregate, was in charge of Father Vulbart, a new arrival from France, who could speak no English. As the new students had but a meagre knowledge of French, the only medium

of communcation was Latin. On St. Patrick's night the boys held a celebration in the corridor. The good Father was too timid to venture out while the disturbance was in progress, but a little later he stopped one of the students, who was a ringleader in the affair and the following conversation took place.

Professor: Domine, audivi magnum strepitum.

Student: Ego, quoque, domine.

Professor: Mihi affert magnum dolorem.

Student: Mihi quoque, domine.

Men may come and men may go, but there was one institution in the Grand, which like Tennyson's brook, went on forever. That was the Rule. It has been said that the artificial lake in the orchard was created by the Sulpicians in order to avoid the elimination of an article in that rule, which had reference to the old seminary grounds and which read "Il est defendu de glisser sur le lac au pied du jardin." Be that as it may, articles were retained which referred to customs long since gone out of vogue. The mention of night-caps always created a smile; and the zealous freshman, who had resolved to live up to the letter of the règlement, was at a loss how to comply with the injunction

that the soutane was the first thing to be put on in the morning, and the last thing to be taken off at night.

The Sulpicians may have perpetuated some traditions that might well have passed into oblivion, but Canada owes them a debt of gratitude for fostering that traditional devotion to the Mother of God which has made Montreal pre-eminently the City of Mary. Of course, the great exemplar in the religious life of the Seminarians was Mary's Son, in Whose Priesthood they aspired to share. How sweet were those half-hours of adoration spent before His altar, where the eye of faith saw clearly, for the dust of the world had not yet obscured its vision; and the ears of the heart, unmolested by profane tumult, were attentive to the voice of the Tabernacle! "Through Mary to Jesus" is the motto of every seminary; but this was in a special manner true of the Grand. The great feast day of the year, the day on which the young aspirants to the priesthood donned the cassock, was the anniversary of Mary's Presentation in the temple. Upon every door in the seminary was a picture of our Lady of Good Help. In a rustic shrine, in the garden, stood an immense statue of Mary

Immaculate, around which in May evenings it was customary to hold devotions. Every year during that month, pilgrimages were made to the sanctuaries of Notre Dame de Lourdes, Notre Dame de Pitie, and to the venerable old church of Notre Dame de Bonsecour. Early in the morning, when the milkmen were making their rounds, the walk through the city would begin, the students reciting the rosary as they went. After Mass and Communion at the shrine, breakfast was served in the gardens of the old seminary. Happy indeed were the students who thus drank in devotion to the Queen of the Clergy on the very soil that was hallowed by its association with her heroic clients of bygone years, and even consecrated by their blood! Of all the treasured memories of seminary life there are none held more dear than the visits to those venerable old sanctuaries, around which cling the traditions of centuries.

The students of modern seminaries enjoy, it is true, many advantages that were denied us in those days. Perhaps the Sulpicians were a little too conservative; but let me bear witness that in teaching the essentials and in moulding the clerical character to habits of piety and the practice of virtue

they certainly fulfilled the injunction inscribed on the seminary altar: "Agnoscite quod agitis; imitamini quod tractatis." We are accustomed now-a-days to hear people speak disparagingly of the French nation because of the attitude of its government; but they should remember that it is not so long ago since we were receiving generous financial aid from the Society of the Propagation of the Faith at Lyons. They should remember that, if they have had priests to minister to their spiritual wants, they owe it to the Fathers of St. Sulpice, who educated them for a nominal sum. When they thank God for the edifying example of a beloved pastor, they should not forget that his earthly ideal was one of those saintly men of Old France whose memory is ever before him, and whose words of counsel and encouragement have been a guide and a consolation to him amid all the difficulties and trials of his priestly life. What grand, noble characters were these gentlemen of St. Sulpice, learned, yet humble, severe with themselves, yet ever kind and courteous, loyal and devoted to their native land, yet broad enough to sympathize with the national sentiments and aspirations of all! The hearts of their priestly children from Antigonish

to Vancouver, from Portland to Dubuque, pay homage to them; for they are the salt that has not lost its savour.

CHAPTER XVI

A RETROSPECT

Ever and on we go
  Over a shelterless plain,
  Bleached by the sun and rain—
On to the hills of snow.

Leaving old loves behind,
  Never their eyes to greet
  Till all true lovers meet;
Stern hearts, but not unkind.

'Tis the old cry: "God wills!"
  The old sign: a blood red cross.
  Gain is begotten of loss.
On to the snow-clad hills!

Lays of the Knights

MY chronicles are written. There but remains to gather up some threads to bind them into one.

In the life of every priest there are certain epochs when, through some internal impulse or external influence, its subsequent course is directed. The first turning point in my life dates from the time when I heard the summons to enter the sanctuary. This summons did not come from bishop, pastor or parent. No one approached me, and I do not remember of having heard a sermon on vocations. It was not so much an attraction as a call. I had but a vague conception of the priesthood, for I was

not in close contact with any priest. My home was some miles distant from the church and I attended a public school. I saw the pastor rarely except on Sunday. I remember once having had the honour of dining with him, an honour which I accepted with great trepidation. Apart from a Catholic home, there was, in my case, none of those influences which are supposed to develop a vocation; yet the accents of the silent voice were quite distinct.

Why I should have been called I do not know, for many of my companions were better equipped by nature than I for the arduous duties of the priesthood. The only solution to the mystery, which I can offer, is that Mass was said for many years in my father's house, or rather my grandfather's house, before a church was erected in the mission. I have read of the wonderful graces which have come to individuals by reason of their living at a place sanctified by the lives of some of God's saints. Is it not reasonable then to suppose that the King of Saints would bestow a perennial blessing upon the home which had offered Him an asylum and a tabernacle in a new land?

I must confess that at first I resisted the call, for I realized the sacrifices which it entailed; but I

could not get away from it "I fled Him down the nights and down the days; yet ever and anon I heard the trumpet sound from the hid battlements of eternity." In my eighteenth year I was taken down with pneumonia and received the last Sacraments. I made a promise then that if my life were spared I would devote it to God's service in the priesthood. The next year I entered St. Michael's College.

Within the venerable walls of that grand old institution, I realized that I had found my metier. I felt at home. When I recall those old days some interesting scenes are flashed upon the canvas of memory. I see again a tall angular recreation master. He was the first person to attract my attention the day I entered college. Why he should stride along a path with the apparent determination of breaking a record, and then wheel around and stride back again, was the first problem presented to me in my academic career. I saw him again the next morning. As my head emerged from beneath the blanket and mattress, I met his eagle eye. It happened thus. Fear of falling out of the narrow bed had kept me awake for hours, and consequently I was so sound asleep when the

morning came that I did not hear the bell. I did fall out, but not in the manner which I had anticipated.

The next view presents a white-haired optimist initiating into the mysteries of voice culture a number of youths who were afterwards relegated to the preface class in the seminary. "Wonderful! Wonderful!" he exclaimed with apparent enthusiasm, "reading music at first sight."

I now come to a scene beyond which I shall not pass, for it marked one of the turning points in my life. When memory calls up that Belles Lettres class of '89 with its familiar faces, sufficient thoughts are suggested for the rest of my meditation. There were nineteen students in that class. Sixteen of them studied for the priesthood but all did not live to see their ordination day. Why the sturdy should be taken and the frail left is another mystery which proves that the principle of the "survival of the fittest" does not apply to human lives.

It is upon the professor that my interest is chiefly centred. As I see him in my mind's eye, his biretta tilted back, his feet anchored under the braces of his chair lest his zeal might transport him, his eyes flashing with interest, his voice resonant with sympathetic delight as he declaimed the

rounded periods of a Ciceronian climax, he seemed the very personification of knowledge, work, interest, enthusiasm, in fact everything that goes to make up the ideal educator. The student, in whom his energy did not arouse ambition, was stolid indeed. Other men might make their pupils work; he made his pupils delight in labour. The rays of dynamic energy seemed to scintillate from him and electrify every member of his class. The student who did not imbibe something of his love for the classics, was verily made of common clay. Other men might teach Latin and Greek; but he did what is far more important; he inspired his students with a love for the classics; he made the story of Achilles' wrath and of Ulysses' wanderings and the beautiful odes of the "Minstrel of the Roman Lyre" not the task of a day but the inheritance of a lifetime. Personally I can bear witness that whatever love for literature I may have acquired I owe to the beautiful selections that were in the old public school readers and to the enthusiasm which Father Mac aroused within me for the classic models of antiquity.

As I thought of that class and of the many subsequent classes upon which he has left the imprint of

his personality, of the influence that they have exerted upon the Catholic life of Canada and the United States, an adequate conception of the results was too great for the mind to grasp. In this day when we hear so much about university endowment and high-salaried professors, it would be well, I thought to myself, if the Catholics of Ontario would realize the debt of gratitude which they owe to the self-sacrificing, unassuming yet learned Fathers of the Basilian Order for their work of three quarters of a century in our midst.

The College has changed in these years. It is now more up-to-date in its furnishings and equipment. Younger men are at the helm and University affiliation has made the atmosphere a little different; but the same spirit still dominates its staff, the Christlike spirit of charity and humility. Well may we apply to it these words of John Boyle O'Reilly:—

> "These hallowed Halls, they have bequeathed to us
> More than mere learning. Strength and Probity,
> And Honour, for our weapons and our shield,
> And Trust in God and in His Providence,
> Religion's burning torch to light our way!"

Of my seminary days I have already made mention. Having survived a five year course, in which there was no vacation from September to June, I

was ordained, on the feast of St. Charles, in the old parish church. Of all the impressions of that eventful day, two stood out prominently. One was the realization of the unweariedness and the minuteness of God's providence in my regard, which was borne in upon me. The other was an emotion of gratitude for the kindness with which I was initiated into their ranks by my brother priests on that occasion. That kindness has endured throughout the years between, has been one of my great supports in the labours of the ministry, and has personally convinced me of what is generally acknowledged, that, apart altogether from its divine mission, the priesthood is the most wonderful brotherhood in the world.

Among these elder brothers there was one with whom my life was more closely linked than with the others. He prepared me for my First Communion, was present to see me receive a prize at college, gave me my first set of breviaries when I received subdeaconship, preached at my ordination, and was my kind superior throughout the greater part of my curate days. I suppose that his counterpart is to be found in the experience of almost every young priest. Certainly one, such as he, plays a

large part in the making of a priest, yea often in the making of many priests.

And now after twenty years I am still in Crofton. Some of my confreres, who are in charge of large parishes, express sympathy for me with my little flock; but I do not envy them. There are some compensations in a small mission which should convince struggling pastors that they are more blessed than they wot of. There is the spirit of parish pride and of parish love, engendered by the necessity of each one's having to do his bit to support the church. The city dweller may be proud of the grand edifice in which he worships, but the same sense of proprietorship cannot be felt where great multitudes are contributing, and where individual effort is swallowed up in the grandeur of the accomplishment. We are just one big family. The very intimacy of our relationship may cause a little irritation at times, but it only requires some trouble in a home to call forth a manifestation of fraternal charity which is most edifying. Even the black sheep are not forgotten, as is sometimes the case when the flock is large. Every one thinks of them individually at the time of a mission or of a forty hours devotion, and joins with the priest in that

prayer, "Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people and give not Thine inheritance to reproach."

Personally I am not a slave to the doorbell or to brick and mortar. I have some time to think, some time to read, some time to write, some time to dream. I have the great consolation of being able to say, "I know mine, and mine know me." I have that intimate knowledge of each household which fosters the spirit of paternity. The roots are now deep set. For years we have laboured and prayed and played together. I will now seal these chronicles of my spiritual children with this familiar l'envoi:—

O! may we ne'er forget the hours, wherever we may be,
We've spent in old St. Mary's hall, so oft in festive glee.
Through joys and tears of coming years, whatever may befall,
Our thoughts will travel back with pride to old St. Mary's hall.

And should the years our paths divide, thoughts dear old church of thee
Will bind us still with golden links of sweetest memory.
O! may each length gain added strength to keep us loyal, true,
To faith and love, to God above, and, Mary dear, to you.

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